FASHIONABLE PHILOSOPHY

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AND

OTHER SKETCHES

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BY

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'PICCADILLY,' 'ALTIORA PETO,' 'MASOLLAM,' ETC.

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PREFACE.

THAT railway travel is not, as a rule, conducive to serious thought, may fairly be inferred from the class of literature displayed on the bookstalls at the stations. I have therefore refrained from any attempt to excite the reflective faculties of the reader, excepting in the first and third of the accompanying sketches, and even in these have only ventured to suggest ideas, the full scope and pregnancy of which it must be left to his own idiosyncrasy to appreciate and develop, the more especially as they bear upon a certain current of investigation which has recently become popular.

I have to express my thanks to the Editor of the 'Nineteenth Century Review' for the

kind permission he has granted me to reproduce "The Sisters of Thibet"; and I avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded of removing the impression which, to my surprise, was conveyed to me by letters from numerous correspondents, that the article contained any record of my own personal experiences. The satire was suggested by the work of an author whose sincerity I do not doubt, and for whose motives I have the highest respect, in order to point out what appears to me the defective morality, from an altruistic and practical point of view, of a system of which he is the principal exponent in this country, and which, under the name of Esoteric Buddhism, still seems to possess some fascination for a certain class of minds.

The other articles originally appeared in Blackwood's Magazine,' and I wish to express my acknowledgments to my publishers for their usual courtesy in allowing me to republish them in this form.

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
January 1887.

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FASHIONABLE PHILOSOPHY.

SCENE—*A London Drawing-room.* TIME—5 *o'clock* P.M.

The afternoon tea apparatus in one corner of the room, and Lady Fritterly *on a couch in another.* The Hon. Mrs Allmash *is announced.*

Lady Fritterly. How too kind, dear, of you to come, and so early, too! I've got such a lot of interesting people coming, and we are going to discuss the religion of the future.

Mrs Allmash. How quite delightful! I do so long for something more substantial than the theologies of the past! It is becoming quite puzzling to know what to teach one's children: mine are getting old enough now to understand about things, and one ought to teach them something. I was talking

about it to that charming Professor Germsell last night.

Lady Fritterly. Well, I hope he is coming presently, so you will be able to continue your conversation. Then there is Mr Coldwaite, the celebrated Comtist; and Mr Fussle, who writes those delightful articles on prehistoric æsthetic evolution; and Mr Drygull, the eminent theosophist, whose stories about esoteric Buddhism are quite too extraordinary, and who has promised to bring a Khoja—a most interesting moral specimen, my dear—who has just arrived from Bombay; and Lord Fondleton.

Mrs Allmash. Lord Fondleton! I did not know that he was interested in such subjects.

Lady Fritterly. He says he is, dear; between ourselves — but this, of course, is strictly *entre nous*—I rather think that it is I who interest him: but I encourage him, poor fellow; it may wean him from the unprofitable life he is leading, and turn his mind to higher things. Oh! I almost forgot, —then there is my new beauty!

Mrs Allmash. Your new beauty!

Lady Fritterly. Yes; if you could only have dined with me the other night, you

would have met her. I had such a perfect little dinner. Just think! A poet, an actor, a journalist, a painter, a wit, and a new beauty. I'll tell you how I found her. She really belongs at present to Lady Islington and myself; but of course, now we have started her, all the other people will snap her up. We found that we both owed that vulgar upstart, Mrs Houndsley, a visit, and went there together —because I always think two people are less easily bored than one—when suddenly the most perfect apparition you ever beheld stood before us;—an old master dress, an immense pattern, a large hat rim encircling a face, some rich auburn hair inside, and the face a perfect one. Well, you know, it turned out that she was not born in the purple—her husband is just a clerk in Burley's Bank; but we both insisted on being introduced to her—for, you see, my dear, there is no doubt about it, she is a ready-made beauty. The same idea occurred to Lady Islington, so we agreed as we drove away that we would bring her out. The result is, that she went to Islington House on Tuesday, and came to me on Thursday, and created a perfect furor on both occasions; so now she is fairly started.

Mrs Allmash. How wonderfully clever and fortunate you are, dear! What is her name?

Lady Fritterly. Mrs Gloring.

Mrs Allmash. Oh yes; everybody was talking about her at the Duchess's last night. I am dying to see her; but they say that she is rather a fool.

Lady Fritterly. Pure spite and jealousy. Yet that is the way these Christian women of society obey the precept of their religion, and love their neighbours as themselves.

[Lord Fondleton *is announced, accompanied by a stranger.*

Lord Fondleton. How d'ye do, Lady Fritterly? I am sure you will excuse my taking the liberty of introducing Mr Rollestone, a very old friend of mine, to you; he has only just returned to England, after an absence of so many years that he is quite a stranger in London.

[Lady Fritterly *is "delighted." The rest of the party arrive in rapid succession.*

Mrs Allmash. Dear Mr Germsell, I was just telling Lady Fritterly what an interesting conversation we were having last night when

it was unfortunately interrupted. I shall be so glad if you would explain more fully now what you were telling me. I am sure everybody would be interested.

Lady Fritterly. Oh do, Mr Germsell; it would be quite too nice of you. And, Mr Drygull, will you ask the Khoja to——

Mr Drygull. My friend's name is Ali Seyyid, Lady Fritterly.

Lady Fritterly. Pray excuse my stupidity, Mr Allyside, and come and sit near me. Lord Fondleton, find Mrs Gloring a chair.

Lord Fondleton [*aside to* Mrs Gloring]. Who's our black friend?

Mrs Gloring. I am sure I don't know. I think Lady Fritterly called him a codger.

Lord Fondleton. Ah, he looks like it,—and a rum one at that, as our American cousins say.

Mrs Gloring. Hush! Mr Germsell is going to begin.

Mr Germsell. Mrs Allmash asked me last night whether my thoughts had been directed to the topic which is uppermost just now in so many minds in regard to the religion of the future, and I ventured to tell her that it would be found to be contained in the generalised expediency of the past.

Mr Fussle. Pardon me, but the religion of the future must be the result of an evolutionary process, and I don't see how generalisations of past expediency are to help the evolution of humanity.

Germsell. They throw light upon it; and the study of the evolutionary process so far teaches us how we may evolve in the future. For instance, you have only got to think of evolution as divided into moral, astronomic, geologic, biologic, psychologic, sociologic, æsthetic, and so forth, and you will find that there is always an evolution of the parts into which [redacted] divides itself, and that therefore there is but one evolution going on everywhere after the same manner. The work of science has been not to extend our experience, for that is impossible, but to systematise it; and in that systematisation of it will be found the religion of which we are in search.

Drygull. May I ask why you deem it impossible that our experience can be extended?

Germsell. Because it has itself defined its limits. The combined experience of humanity, so far as its earliest records go, has been limited by laws, the nature of which

have been ascertained: it is impossible that it should be transcended without violation of the conclusions arrived at by positive science.

Drygull. I can more easily understand that the conclusions arrived at by men of science should be limited, than that the experience of humanity should be confined by those conclusions; but I fail to perceive why those philosophers should deny the existence of certain human faculties, because they don't happen to possess them themselves. I think I know a Rishi who can produce experiences which would scatter all their conclusions to the winds, when the whole system which is built upon them would collapse.

Mrs Gloring [*aside to* Lord Fondleton]. Pray, Lord Fondleton, can you tell me what a Rishi is?

Lord Fondleton. A man who has got into higher states, you know—what I heard Mr Drygull call a transcendentalist the other day, whatever that may be. I don't understand much about these matters myself, but I take it he is a sort of evolved codger.

Mrs Allmash. Oh, how awfully interesting! Dear Mr Drygull, do tell us some of the extraordinary things the Rishi can do.

Drygull. If you will only all of you listen attentively, and if Mr Germsell will have the goodness to modify to some degree the prejudiced attitude of mind common to all men of science, you will hear him as plainly as I can at this moment beating a tom-tom in his cottage in the Himalayas.

[Mr Germsell *gets up impatiently, and walks to the other end of the back drawing-room.*

Drygull [*casting a compassionate glance after him*]. Perhaps it is better so. Now please, Lady Fritterly, I must request a few moments of the most profound silence on the part of all. You will not hear the sound as though coming from a distance, but it will seem rather like a muffled drumming taking place inside your head, scarcely perceptible at first, when its volume will gradually increase.

Lord Fondleton [*aside to* Mrs Gloring]. Some bad champagne produced the same phenomenon in my head last night.

Lady Fritterly [*severely*]. Hush! Lord Fondleton.

[*There is a dead silence for some minutes.*

Mrs Gloring [*excitedly*]. Oh, I hear it!

It is something like a woodpecker inside of one.

Drygull. Not a word, my dear madam, if you please.

Lady Fritterly [*after a long pause*]. I imagine I hear a very faint something; there it goes—boom, boom, boom—at the back of my tympanum.

Lord Fondleton. That's not like a woodpecker.

Mrs Gloring. No; it seems to me more like tic-tic-tic.

Mrs Allmash. How too tiresome! I can't hear anything. I suppose it is on account of the rumble of the carriages.

Lord Fondleton [*whispers to* Mrs Gloring]. I hear something inside of me; do you know what?

Mrs Gloring. No; what?

Lord Fondleton. The beating of my own heart. Can't you guess for whom?

Mrs Gloring. No. Perhaps the Rishi makes it beat.

Lord Fondleton. Dear Mrs Gloring, you are the Rishi for whom——

Mrs Gloring. Hush!

Lady Fritterly. There, it is getting louder,

like distant artillery, and yet so near. Oh, Mr Drygull, what a wonderful man the Rishi must be!

Drygull. Yes; he knew that at this hour to-day I should need an illustration of his power, and he is kindly furnishing us with one. This is an experience which I think our friend over there [*looking towards* Mr Germsell] would find it difficult to classify.

Germsell. Fussle, have the goodness to step here for a moment—[*points to a woman beating a carpet in the back-yard of an adjoining house*]. That is the tom-tom in the Himalayas they are listening to.

Fussle. Well, now, do you know, I don't feel quite sure of that. I was certainly conscious of a sort of internal hearing of something when you called me, which was not that; it was as though I had fiddlestrings in my head and somebody was beginning to strum upon them.

Germsell. Fiddlestrings indeed—say rather fiddlesticks. I am surprised at a sensible man like yourself listening to such nonsense.

Fussle [*testily*]. It is much greater nonsense for you to tell me I don't hear something I do hear, than for me to hear something you can't

hear. You may be deaf, while my sense of hearing may be evolving. Can you hear what Lord Fondleton is saying to Mrs Gloring at this moment?

Germsell. No, and I don't want to.

Fussle. Ah, there it is. You won't hear anything you don't want to. Now I can, and he ought not to say it;—look how she is blushing. Oh, I forgot you are short-sighted. Well, you see, I can hear further than you, and see further than you. Why should you set a limit on the evolution of the senses, and say that no man in the future can ever hear or see further than men have in the past? How dare you, sir, with your imperfect faculties and your perfunctory method of research, which can only cover an infinitesimal period in the existence of this planet, venture to limit the potentialities of those laws which have already converted us from ascidians into men, and which may as easily evolve in us the faculty of hearing tom-toms in the Himalayas while we are sitting here, as of that articulate speech or intelligent reasoning which, owing to their operation, we now possess?

Germsell. Pardon me, you do not possess them, Mr Fussle.

Lady Fritterly. Mr Fussle, might I ask you to take this cup of tea to Mrs Allmash? Mr Germsell, it would be too kind of you to hand Mrs Gloring the cake.

Fussle [*savagely*]. We will continue this conversation at the Minerva.

Mrs Allmash [*apart to the* Khoja]. Oh, Mr Allyside, I am so glad to hear that you speak English so perfectly! I want you to tell me all about your religion; perhaps it may help us, you know, to find the religion of the future, which we are all longing for. And I am so interested in oriental religions! there is something so charmingly picturesque about them. I quite dote on those dear old Shastras, and Vedas, and Puranas; they contain such a lot of beautiful things, you know.

Ali Seyyid. I know as little, madam, of the Indian books you mention as I do of the Bible, which I have always heard was a very good book, and contained also a great many beautiful things. I am neither a Hindoo nor a Buddhist,—in fact, it is forbidden to me by my religion to tell you exactly what I am.

Mrs Allmash. But indeed I won't tell anybody if you will only confide in me. Oh, this

mystery is too exquisitely delicious! Who knows, perhaps you might make a convert of me?

Ali Seyyid [*with an admiring gaze*]. Madam, you would be a prize so well worth winning, that you almost tempt me. The first of our secrets is that we are all things to all men, until we are quite sure of the sympathy of the listener; then we venture a step further.

Mrs Allmash. How wise that is! and how unlike the system adopted by Christians! You may be sure of my most entire sympathy.

Ali Seyyid. The next principle is—but this is a profound secret, which you must promise not to repeat—the rejection of all fixed rules of religion or morality. It really does not matter in the least what you do: the internal disposition is the only thing of any value. Now, as far as I understand, you have already got rid of the religion, or you would not be looking for a new one; all you have to do is to get rid of the morality, and there you are.

Mrs Allmash [*with an expression of horror and alarm*]. Yes, there I should be indeed. Oh, Mr Allyside, what a dreadful man you

are! Who started such an extraordinary doctrine?

Ali Seyyid. Well, his name was Hassan-bin-Saba—commonly known among Westerns as the "Old Man of the Mountain." His followers, owing to the value they attached to murder as a remedial agent, have been known by the name of the "Assassins."

Mrs Allmash. Oh, good gracious!

Lady Fritterly. My dear Louisa, what is the matter? You look quite frightened.

Ali Seyyid. Mrs Allmash is a little alarmed because I proposed a new morality for the future, as well as a new religion.

Mr Coldwaite. Excuse me; but in discussions of this sort, I think it is most important that we should clearly understand the meanings of the terms we employ. Now I deny that any difference subsists between religion and morality. That any such distinction should exist in men's minds is due to the fact that dogma is inseparably connected with religion. If you eliminate dogma, what does religion consist of but morality? Substitute the love of Humanity for the love of the Unknowable—which is the subject of worship of Mr Germsell; or of the Deity, who is the ob-

ject of worship of the majority of mankind-and you obtain a stimulus to morality which will suffice for all human need. It is in this great emotion, as it seems to me, that you will find at once the religion and the morality of the future.

Germsell. From what source do you get the force which enables you to love humanity with a devotion so intense that it shall elevate your present moral standard?

Coldwaite. From humanity itself. I am not going to be entrapped into getting it from any unknowable source; the love of humanity, whether it be humanity as existing, or when absorbed by death into the general mass, is perpetually generating itself.

Mrs Allmash. Then it must produce itself from what was there before; therefore it must be the same love, which keeps on going round and round.

Lord Fondleton. A sort of circular love, in fact. I've often felt it: but I didn't think it right to encourage it.

Lady Fritterly. Lord Fondleton, how can you be so silly? Don't pay attention to him, Mr Coldwaite. I confess I still don't see how you can get a higher love out of humanity

than humanity has already got in it, unless you are to look to some other source for it.

Coldwaite. Why, mayn't it evolve from itself?

Germsell. How can it evolve without a propulsive force behind it? The thing is too palpable an absurdity to need argument. You can no more fix limits to the origin of force than you can destroy its persistency.

Lord Fondleton [*aside*]. That seems to me one of those sort of things no fellow can understand.

Germsell. All you can say of it is that it is a conditioned effect of an unconditioned cause. That no idea or feeling arises, save as a result of some physical force expended in producing it, is fast becoming a commonplace of science; and whoever duly weighs the evidence will see that nothing but an overwhelming bias in favour of a preconceived theory can explain its non-acceptance. I think my friend Mr Herbert Spencer has demonstrated this conclusively.

Coldwaite. Pardon me; do I understand you to say that the mental process which enabled Mr Spencer to elaborate his system of philosophy, or that the profound emotion

which finds its expression in a love for humanity, are the result of physical force alone?

Germsell. He says so himself, and he ought to know. His whole system of philosophy is nothing more nor less than the result of the liberation of certain forces produced by chemical action in the brain.

Drygull. Then, if I understand you rightly, if the chemical changes which have been taking place for some years past in his brain had liberated a different set of forces, we should have had altogether a different philosophy.

Germsell. The chemical changes would in that case have been different.

Drygull. But the changes must be produced by forces acting on them.

Germsell. Exactly: a force which has its source in the Unknowable produces a certain chemical action in the brain by which it becomes converted into thought or emotion, into love or philosophy, into art or religion, as the case may be: what the nature of that love or philosophy, or art or religion, may be, must depend entirely on the nature of the chemical change.

Lord Fondleton [*aside to* Mrs Gloring]. I

feel the most delightful chemical changes taking place now in my brain, dear Mrs Gloring. May I explain to you the exquisite nature of the forces that are being liberated, and which produce emotions of the most tender character.

Lady Fritterly [*sharply*]. What are you saying, Lord Fondleton?

Lord Fondleton. Ahem—I was saying—ahem—I was saying that we shall be having some Yankee inventing steam thinking-mills and galvanic loving-batteries soon. What a lot of wear and tear it would save! I should go about covered with a number of electric love-wires for the force to play upon.

Fussle. I think this matter wants clearing up, Mr Germsell. Why don't you write a book on mental and emotional physics?

Mr Rollestone. I would venture with great diffidence to remark that the confusion seems to me to arise from the limit we attach to the meaning of the word employed. It may be quite true that no idea or emotion can exist except as the result of physical force; but it is also true that its effect must be conditioned on the quality of the force. There is as wide a difference between the physical forces

operant in the brain, and which give rise to ideas, and those which move a steam-engine, as there is between mind and matter as popularly defined. Both, as Mr Germsell will admit, are conditioned manifestations of force; but the one contains a vital element in its dynamism which the other does not. You may apply as much physical force by means of a galvanic battery to a dead brain as you please, but you can't strike an idea out of it; and this vital force, while it is "conditioned force," like light and heat, differs in its mode of manifestation from every other manifestation of force, even more than they do from each other, in that it possesses a potency inherent to it, which they have not, and this potency it is which creates emotion and generates ideas. The fallacy which underlies the whole of this system of philosophy is contained in the assumption that there is only one description of physical force in nature.

Germsell. No more there is. Why, Mr Spencer says that the law of metamorphosis which holds among the physical forces, holds equally between them and the mental forces; but mark you, what is the grand conclusion

at which he arrives? I happen to remember the passage: "How this metamorphosis takes place; how a force existing, as motion, heat, or light, can become a mode of consciousness; how it is possible for aerial vibrations to generate the sensation we call sound; or for the forces liberated by chemical changes in the brain to give rise to emotion, —these are mysteries which it is impossible to fathom."

Lord Fondleton [*aside to* Mrs Gloring]. What a jolly easy way of getting out of a difficulty!

Drygull. Of course, if you admit such gross ignorance as to how it is possible for aerial vibrations "to generate the sensation we call sound," I don't wonder at your not hearing the tom-tom in the Himalayas we were listening to just now. If you knew a little more about the astral law under which aerial vibrations may be generated, you would not call things impossible which you admit to be unfathomable mysteries. If it is an unfathomable mystery how a sound is projected a mile, why do you refuse to admit the possibility of its being projected two, or two hundred, or two thousand? Under the laws

which govern mysteries, which you say are unfathomable, if the mystery is unfathomable, so is the law, and you have no right to limit its action.

Rollestone. To come back to the question of a possible distinction in the essential or inherent qualities of dynamic or physical forces. There is nothing in the hypothesis which may not be reasonably assumed and tested by experiment; and before any man has a right to affirm that there is only one quality of physical force in nature, which, by undergoing transformation and metamorphosis, shall account for all its phenomena, I have a right to ask whether the hypothesis, that there may be another, has been experimentally tested. It would then be time for me to accept the conclusion that there is only one, and that it is an unfathomable mystery how this one force should be able to perform all the functions attributed to it.

Gernsell. I admit that the forces called vital are correlates of the forces called physical, if you choose to call that a distinction; but their character is conditioned by the state of the brain, and it comes to the same thing in the end. The seat of emotion as well as of

thought is the brain, and it entirely depends on its chemical constitution, on its circulation, and on other causes affecting that organ, what you think, and feel, and say, and do. People's characters differ because their brains do, not because there is any difference in the vital force which animates them.

Rollestone. You might as well say that sounds differ because their aerial vibrations differ, but those vibrations only differ because the force makes them differ which is acting upon them. They don't generate tunes, but convey them. And the result, so far as our hearing is concerned, depends upon what are called the acoustic conditions under which the vibrations take place. Just so the brain possesses no generating function of its own; it deals with and transmits the ideas and emotions projected upon it according to the organic conditions by which it may be affected at the time, whether those ideas and emotions are produced by external stimuli, or apparently, but only apparently, as I believe, owe their origin to genesis in the brain itself. In the one case the brain is vibrating to the touch of an external force, in the other to one that is inter-

nal and unseen, just as the air does when it transmits sound, whether you see the cause which produces it or not; and the mystery which remains to be fathomed, but which I do not admit to be unfathomable until somebody tries to fathom it, is the nature of those unseen forces.

Germsell. How would you propose to try and fathom it?

Rollestone. By experiment: I know of no other way. The forces which generate emotions and ideas must possess a moral quality: the experiments must therefore be moral experiments.

Germsell. How do you set to work to experimentalise morally?

Rollestone. As the process must of necessity be a purely personal one, carried on, if I may use the expression, in one's own moral organism, I have a certain delicacy in attempting to describe it. In fact, Lady Fritterly, if you will allow me to say so, as the whole subject which has been under discussion this afternoon is the most profoundly solemn which can engage the attention of a human being, I shrink from entering upon it as fully as I would do under other circumstances. I

people begin to want a new religion because it is the fashion to want one, I venture to predict that they will never find it. If they want a new religion because they can't come up to the moral standard of the one they have got, then I would advise them to look rather to that unseen force within them, which I have been attempting to describe to Mr Germsell, for the potency which may enable them to reach it.

Lady Fritterly. Indeed, Mr Rollestone, we are all exceedingly in earnest. I never felt so serious in my life. Of course this London life must all seem very frivolous to you ; but that we can't help, you know. We can't all go away and make moral experiments like you. What we feel is, that we ought all to endeavour as much as possible to introduce a more serious tone into society. We want to get rid of the selfishness, and the littlenesses, and the petty ambitions and envyings, and the scandals that go on. Don't we, Louisa, dear? And you can't think how grateful I am to Lord Fondleton for having given me the pleasure of your acquaintance. I hope I may often see you ; I am sure you would do us all so much good. You will

always find me at home on Sunday afternoons at this hour.

Mrs Allmash. It is so refreshing to meet any one so full of information and earnestness as you are, in this wicked, jaded London. Please go on, Mr Rollestone; what you were saying was so interesting. Have you really been experimentalising on your own moral organism? How quite too extraordinary!

Lord Foudleton [*aside to* Mrs Gloring]. By Jove! I had no idea old Rollestone could come out in this line. He is a regular dark horse. I should never have suspected it. He will be first favourite in London this season, and win in a canter.

Coldwaite. You will excuse me, Mr Rollestone, but I really am interested, and I really am serious. It was with no idle curiosity that I was waiting to hear your answer to Mr Germsell's inquiry, as to the nature of the moral experiment necessary to test the character of this unseen force.

Rollestone. I can only say that any experiment which deals with the affectional and emotional part of one's nature must be painful in the extreme. There is, indeed, only one mo-

tive which would induce one to undergo the trials, sufferings, sacrifices, and ordeals which it involves—and that is one in which you will sympathise: it is the hope that humanity may benefit by the result of one's efforts. Indeed, any lower motive than this would vitiate them. I will venture to assert to Mr Germsell, who is so sceptical as to the existence of any other quality in that force, which he can only fathom so far as to know that it is physical, that I will put him through a course of experiment which will cause him more acute moral suffering than his brain could bear, unless it was sustained by a force which, by that experimental process, will reveal attributes contained in it not dreamt of in his philosophy.

Germsell. I have no doubt you could strain my mind until it was weak enough to believe anything, even your fantastic theories. Thank you, I would rather continue to experiment with my own microscope and forceps than let you experiment either upon my affections or my brains.

Fussle [*aside to* Mr Rollestone]. You could not make anything of them even if he consented—the former don't exist, and the

latter are mere putty — but I can quite understand your desire to begin *in corpore vili.*

Lord Fondleton [*aside to* Mrs Glöring]. Allow me freely to offer you my affections as peculiarly adapted to experiments of this nature.

Rollestone. It has always struck me as strange that men of science, who don't shrink from testing, for instance, the value of poisons, or the nature of disease, by heroically subjecting their own external organisms to their action, should shrink from experimenting on that essential if remote vitalising force, which can only be reached by moral experiment, and disorder in which produces not only moral obliquity and mental alienation, but physical disease as well.

Fussle. Thus a man may die of apoplexy brought on by a fit of passion. Cure his temper, and you lessen the danger of apoplexy; that, I take it, is an illustration of what you mean.

Rollestone. In its most external application it is; the question is where his bad temper comes from, and whether, as Mr Germsell would maintain, it is entirely due to his cere-

bral condition, and not to the moral qualities inherent in the force, which, acting on peculiar cerebral conditions, causes one man's temper to differ from another's. It is not the liberated force which generates the temper. For that you have to go farther back; and the reason why research is limited in this direction is not because it is impossible to go farther back, but because it must inevitably entail, as I have already said, acute personal suffering. Nor, as these experiments must be purely personal, and involve experiences of an entirely novel kind, is it possible to discuss them except with those who have participated in them. One might as well attempt to describe the emotion of love to a man whose affections had never been called forth. If I have alluded to them so fully now, it is because they justify me in making the assertion, for which I can offer no other proof than they have afforded to me personally, that a force does exist in nature possessing an inherent spiritual potency — I use the word spiritual for lack of a better—which is capable of lifting humanity to a higher moral plane of daily living and acting than that which it has hitherto attained. But I fear

I am trespassing on your patience in having said thus much.

Lady Fritterly. Oh no, Mr Rollestone; please go on. There is something so delightfully fresh and original in all you are saying, I can't tell you how much you interest me.

Germsell [*aside*]. I know a milkmaid quite as fresh and rather more original. [*Aloud, looking at his watch.*] Bless me! it is past six, and I have an appointment at the club at six. So sorry to tear myself away, dear Lady Fritterly. I can't tell you how I have enjoyed the intellectual treat you have provided for me.

Lady Fritterly. I thank you so much for coming. I hope you will often look in on our Sundays. I think, you know, that these little conversations are so very improving.

Germsell. You may rely upon me; it is impossible to imagine anything more interesting. [*Mutters as he leaves the room.*] No, Lady Fritterly, this is the last time I enter this house, except perhaps to dinner. You don't catch me again making one of your Sunday afternoon collection of bores and idiots. What an insufferable prig that Rollestone is!

Fussle [*aside to* Drygull]. Thank heaven, that pompous nuisance has taken himself off!

Drygull [*aside to* Fussle]. I don't know which I dislike most—the Pharisee of science or the Pharisee of religion.

Rollestone. If, then, you admit that the human organism not only cannot generate force, but that the emotions which control the body are in their turn generated by a force which is behind it, and that this force is dependent for its manifestation on its own special conditions, as well as on those of its transmitting organic medium, I venture to assert that experiment in the direction I have suggested will prove to our consciousness that the moral or spiritual quality of the original invading force is a pure one, and that the degree of its pollution in the human frame is the effect of inherited and other organic conditions; and the question which presents itself to the experimentalist is, whether by an effort of the will this same force may not be evoked to change and purify those conditions. Indeed the very effort is in itself an invocation, and if made unflinchingly, will not fail to meet with a response. Much that has heretofore been

to earnest seekers unknowable will become knowable, and a love, Mr Coldwaite, higher, if that be possible, than the love of humanity, yet correlative with and inseparable from it, will be found pressing with an irresistible potency into those vacant spaces of the human heart, which have from all time yearned for a closer contact with the Great Source of all love and of all force. It is in this attempt to sever the love of humanity from its Author, that the Positivist philosophy has failed: it is the worship of a husk without the kernel, of a body without the soul; and hence it will never satisfy the human aspiration. That aspiration is ever the same; it needs, if you will allow me to say so, Lady Fritterly, no new religion to satisfy its demands. If the world is of late beginning to feel dissatisfied with Christianity, it is not because the moral standard which that religion proposes is not sufficiently lofty for its requirements, but because, after eighteen hundred years of effort, its professors have altogether failed to reach that standard. Christianity seems a failure because Christians have failed—have failed to understand its application to everyday life, have failed to embody it in practice, and have

sought an escape from the apparent impossibility of doing so, by smothering it with dogmas, and diverting its scope from this world to the next. It will be time to look for a new religion, when we have succeeded in the literal application of the ethics of the one we have got to the social and economic problems of daily life. It is not by any intellectual effort or scientific process that the discovery will be made of how this is to be done, but by the introduction into the organism of new and unsuspected potencies of moral force which have hitherto lain dormant in nature, waiting for the great invocation of wearied and distressed humanity. There can be no stronger evidence of the approach of this new force, destined to make the ethics of Christianity a practical social standard, than the growing demand of society for a new religion. It is the inarticulate utterance of the quickened human aspiration, in itself a proof that these new potencies are already stirring the dry bones of Christendom, and a sure earnest that their coming in answer to that aspiration will not be long delayed.

Drygull. Of course, I entirely disagree with you as to any such necessity in regard to the

moral requirements of the world, existing. You must have met, in the course of your travels, that more enlightened and initiated class of Buddhists, with whom I sympathise, who are quite indifferent to considerations of this nature.

Rollestone. And who were too much occupied with their subjective prospects in Nirvana, to be affected by the needs of terrestrial humanity.

Drygull. Quite so.

Mrs Allmash. And, Mr Allyside, I am afraid you are equally indifferent.

Ali Seyyid. I am certainly not indifferent to the discovery of any force latent in Christendom which may check the force of its cupidity, and put a stop to the *exploitation* and subjugation of Eastern countries for the sake of advancing its own material interests, under the specious pretext of introducing the blessings of civilisation.

Coldwaite. You have certainly presented the matter in a light which is altogether new to me, Mr Rollestone, and upon which, therefore, I am not now prepared to express an opinion. I should like to discuss the subject with you further privately.

Rollestone. It is a subject which should never be discussed except privately.

Mrs Allmash. Now, I should say, Mr Rollestone, on the contrary, that it was just a subject you ought to write a book about. You would have so much to tell,—all your personal experiments, you know; now do.

Fussle. Take my advice, Mr Rollestone, and don't. You would have very few readers, and those who read you would only sneer at what they would call your crude ideas; and indeed, you will excuse me for saying so, but I am not sure that they would not be right.

Lord Fondleton. I quite disagree with you, Mr Fussle. If Rollestone would write a book which would put a stop to this "religion of the future" business, he would earn the gratitude of society. Do you know, I am getting rather bored with it.

Fussle. Not if he introduced instead a latent force, which should overturn all existing institutions, and revolutionise society — which it would inevitably have to do if we were all coerced by it into adopting literally the ethics of Christianity, instead of merely professing them. Why, the "Sermon on the Mount" alone, practised to the letter, would produce

a general destruction. Church and State, and the whole economic system upon which society is based, would melt away before it like an iceberg under a tropical sun. I don't mind discussing the religion of the future as a subject of interesting speculation; but, depend upon it, we had better let well alone. It seems to me that we—at least those of us who are well off—have nothing to complain of. Let us trust to the silent forces of evolution. See how much they have lately done for us in the matter of art. What can be pleasanter than this gentle process of æsthetic development which our higher faculties are undergoing? With due deference to Mr Rollestone, I think we shall be far better employed in cultivating our taste, than in probing our own organisms in the hope of discovering forces which may enable us to apply a perfectly unpractical system of morality, to a society which has every reason to be satisfied with the normal progress it is making.

Mrs Gloring. Indeed, Mr Rollestone, I agree with you a great deal more than with Mr Fussle. I should like to call out a higher moral force in myself—but I should never have the courage to undergo all the ordeals

you say it would involve; I am too weak to try.

Lord Fondleton. Of course you are,—don't! You are much nicer as you are. Why, Rollestone, you would make all the women detestable if you could have your way.

Rollestone. I don't think there is any immediate cause for alarm on that score.

Mrs Allmash [*rising*]. Dearest Augusta, I am afraid I must run away: thank you *so* much, for *such* a treat. [*All rise.*] Mrs Glorring, we have all been so deeply interested, that we have scarcely been able to exchange a word, but I hope we shall see a great deal of each other this year. I have a few people coming to me to-morrow evening; do you think you can spare a moment from your numerous engagements? Lady Fritterly and Lord Fondleton are coming; and perhaps, Mr Drygull, you will come, and bring Mr Allyside. Mr Fussle, I know it is useless to expect you; and I cannot venture to ask Mr Rollestone to anything so frivolous. But perhaps you will dine with me on Thursday —you will meet some congenial spirits.

Rollestone. Thank you, but I fear it will be impossible, as I leave London to-morrow.

Good-bye, Lady Fritterly. Forgive me, an utter stranger, for having so far obtruded my experiences upon you, and for venturing finally to suggest that it is in our own hearts that we should search for the religion that we need; for is it not written, "The kingdom of heaven is within you"?

THE BRIGAND'S BRIDE

A TALE OF SOUTHERN ITALY.

THE Italian peninsula during the years 1859-60-61 offered a particularly tempting field for adventure to ardent spirits in search of excitement; and, attracted partly by my sympathy with the popular movement, and partly by that simple desire, which gives so much zest to the life of youth, of risking it on all possible occasions, I had taken an active part, chiefly as an officious spectator, in all the principal events of those stirring years. It was in the spring of 1862 that I found matters beginning to settle down to a degree that threatened monotony; and with the termination of the winter gaieties at Naples and the close of the San Carlo, I seriously bethought me of accepting the offer of a naval friend who was about to engage in

blockade-running, and offered to land me in the Confederate States, when a recrudescence of activity on the part of the brigand bands in Calabria induced me to turn my attention in that direction. The first question I had to consider was, whether I should enjoy myself most by joining the brigands, or the troops which were engaged in suppressing them. As the former aspired to a political character, and called themselves patriotic bands fighting for their Church, their country, and their King — the refugee monarch of Naples—one could espouse their cause without exactly laying one's self open to the charge of being a bandit; but it was notorious in point of fact that the bands cared for neither the Pope nor the exiled King nor their annexed country, but committed the most abominable atrocities in the names of all the three, for the simple purpose of filling their pockets. I foresaw not only extreme difficulty in being accepted as a member of the fraternity, more especially as I had hitherto been identified with the Garibaldians; but also the probability of finding myself compromised by acts from which my conscience would revolt, and for which my life

would in all likelihood pay the forfeit. On the other hand, I could think of no friend among the officers of the Bersaglieri and cavalry regiments, then engaged in brigand-hunting in the Capitanata and Basilicata, to whom I could apply for an invitation to join them.

Under these circumstances, I determined to trust to the chapter of accidents; and armed with a knapsack, a sketch-book, and an air-gun, took my seat one morning in the Foggia diligence, with the vague idea of getting as near the scene of operations as possible, and seeing what would turn up. The air-gun was not so much a weapon of offence or defence as a means of introduction to the inhabitants. It had the innocent appearance of rather a thick walking-cane, with a little brass trigger projecting; and in the afternoon I would join the group sitting in front of the chemist's, which, for some reason or other, is generally a sort of open-air club in a small Neapolitan town, or stroll into the single modest *café* of which it might possibly boast, and toy abstractedly with the trigger. This, together with my personal appearance—for do what I would, I could never make myself

look like a Neapolitan—would be certain to attract attention, and some one bolder than the rest would make himself the spokesman, and politely ask me whether the cane in my hand was an umbrella or a fishing-rod; on which I would amiably reply that it was a gun, and that I should have much pleasure in exhibiting my skill and the method of its operation to the assembled company. Then the whole party would follow me to an open space, and I would call for a pack of cards, and possibly—for I was a good shot in those days—pink the ace of hearts at fifteen paces. At any rate my performances usually called forth plaudits, and this involved a further interchange of compliments and explanations, and the production of my sketch-book, which soon procured me the acquaintance of some ladies and an invitation as an English artist, to the house of some respectable citizen.

So it happened that, getting out of the diligence before it reached Foggia, I struck south, and wandered for some days from one little town to another, being always hospitably entertained, whether there happened to be an *albergo* or not, at private houses, seeing in this way more of the manners and customs of

the inhabitants than would have been otherwise possible, gaining much information as to the haunts of the brigands, the whereabouts of the troops, and hearing much local gossip generally. The ignorance of the most respectable classes at this period was astounding; it has doubtless all changed since. I have been at a town of 2000 inhabitants, not one of whom took in a newspaper: the whole population, therefore, was in as profound ignorance of what was transpiring in the rest of the world as if they had been in Novaia Zemlia. I have stayed with a mayor who did not know that England was an island; I have been the guest of a citizen who had never heard of Scotland, and to whom, therefore, my nationality was an enigma: but I never met any one—I mean of this same class—who had not heard of Palmerston. He was a mysterious personage, execrated by the "blacks" and adored by the "reds." And I shone with a reflected lustre as the citizen of a country of which he was the Prime Minister. As a consequence, we had political discussions, which were protracted far into the night, for the principal meal of the twenty-four hours was a 10 o'clock

P.M. supper, at which, after the inevitable macaroni, were many unwholesome dishes, such as salads made of thistles, cows' udders, and other delicacies, which deprived one of all desire for sleep. Notwithstanding which, we rose early, my hostess and the ladies of the establishment appearing in the early part of the day in the most extreme deshabille. Indeed, on one occasion when I was first introduced into the family of a respectable citizen, and shown into my bedroom, I mistook one of two females who were making the bed for the servant, and was surprised to see her hand a little douceur I gave her as an earnest of attention on her part, to the other with a smile. She soon afterwards went to bed: we all did, from 11 A.M. till about 3 P.M., at which hour I was horrified to meet her arrayed in silks and satins, and to find that she was the wife of my host. She kindly took me a drive with her in a carriage and pair, and with a coachman in livery.

It was by this simple means, and by thus imposing myself upon the hospitality of these unsophisticated people, that I worked my way by slow degrees, chiefly on foot, into the part of the country I desired to visit; and I

trust that I in a measure repaid them for it by the stores of information which I imparted to them, and of which they stood much in need, and by little sketches of their homes and the surrounding scenery, with which I presented them. I was, indeed, dependent in some measure for hospitality of this description, as I had taken no money with me, partly because, to tell the truth, I had scarcely got any, and partly because I was afraid of being robbed by brigands of the little I had. I therefore eschewed the character of a *milordo Inglese;* but I never succeeded in dispelling all suspicion that I might not be a nephew of the Queen, or at least a very near relative of "Palmerston" in disguise. It was so natural, seeing what a deep interest both her Majesty and the Prime Minister took in Italy, that they should send some one *incognito* whom they could trust to tell them all about it.

Meantime, I was not surprised, when I came to know the disposition of the inhabitants, at the success of brigandage. It has never been my fortune before or since to live among such a timid population. One day at a large town a leading landed proprietor

received notice that if he did not pay a certain sum in black-mail,—I forget at this distance of time the exact amount,—his farm or *masseria* would be robbed. This farm, which was in fact a handsome country-house, was distant about ten miles from the town. He therefore made an appeal to the citizens that they should arm themselves, and help him to defend his property, as he had determined not to pay, and had taken steps to be informed as to the exact date when the attack was to be made in default of payment. More than 300 citizens enrolled themselves as willing to turn out in arms. On the day preceding the attack by the brigands, a rendezvous was given to these 300 on the great square for five in the morning, and thither I accordingly repaired, unable, however, to induce my host to accompany me, although he had signed as a volunteer. On reaching the rendezvous, I found the landed proprietor and a friend who was living with him, and about ten minutes afterwards two other volunteers strolled up. Five was all we could muster out of 300. It was manifestly useless to attempt anything with so small a force, and no arguments could induce any of the others

to turn out; so the unhappy gentleman had the satisfaction of knowing that the brigands had punctually pillaged his place, carrying off all his live stock on the very day and at the very hour they said they would. As for the inhabitants venturing any distance from town, except under military escort, such a thing was unknown, and all communication with Naples was for some time virtually intercepted. I was regarded as a sort of monomaniac of recklessness, because I ventured on a solitary walk of a mile or two in search of a sketch,—an act of no great audacity on my part, for I had walked through various parts of the country without seeing a brigand, and found it difficult to realise that there was any actual danger in strolling a mile from a moderately large town.

Emboldened by impunity, I was tempted one day to follow up a most romantic glen in search of a sketch, when I came upon a remarkably handsome peasant girl, driving a donkey before her loaded with wood. My sudden appearance on the narrow path made the animal shy against a projecting piece of rock, off which he rebounded to the edge of the path, which, giving way, precipitated him

and his load down the ravine. He was brought up unhurt against a bush some twenty feet below, the fagots of wood being scattered in his descent in all directions. For a moment the girl's large fierce eyes flashed upon me with anger; but the impetuosity with which I went headlong after the donkey, with a view of repairing my error, and the absurd attempts I made to reverse the position of his feet, which were in the air, converted her indignation into a hearty fit of laughter, as, seeing that the animal was apparently uninjured, she scrambled down to my assistance. By our united efforts we at last succeeded in hoisting the donkey up to the path, and then I collected the wood and helped her to load it again—an operation which involved a frequent meeting of hands, and of the eyes, which had now lost the ferocity that had startled me at first, and seemed getting more soft and beaming every time I glanced at them, till at last, producing my sketch-book, I ventured to remark, "Ah, signorina, what a picture you would make! Now that the ass is loaded, let me draw you before we part, that I may carry away the recollection of the loveliest woman I have seen."

"First draw the donkey," she replied, "that I may carry away a recollection of the *galantuomo* who first upset him over the bank, and then helped me to load him."

Smiling at this ambiguous compliment, I gave her the sketch she desired, and was about to claim my reward, when she abruptly remarked—

"There is not time now; it is getting late, and I must not linger, as I have still an hour to go before reaching home. How is it that you are not afraid to be wandering in this solitary glen by yourself? Do you not know the risks?"

"I have heard of them, but I do not believe in them," I said; "besides, I should be poor plunder for robbers."

"But you have friends, who would pay to ransom you, I suppose, if you were captured?"

"My life is not worth a hundred *scudi* to any of them," I replied, laughing; "but I am willing to forego the pleasure of drawing you now, *bellissima*, if you will tell me where you live, and let me come and paint you there at my leisure."

"You're a brave one," she said, with a little laugh; "there is not another man in all Ascoli

who would dare to pay me a visit without an escort of twenty soldiers. But I am too grateful for your amiability to let you run such a risk. *Addio*, Signor Inglese. There are many reasons why I can't let you draw my picture, but I am not ungrateful, see!" —and she offered me her cheek, on which I instantly imprinted a chaste and fraternal salute.

"Don't think that you've seen the last of me, *carissima*," I called out, as she turned away. "I shall live on the memory of that kiss till I have an opportunity of repeating it."

And as I watched her retreating figure with an artist's eye, I was struck with its grace and suppleness, combined, as I had observed while she was helping me to load the donkey, with an unusual degree of muscular strength for a woman.

The spot at which this episode had taken place was so romantic, that I determined to make a sketch of it, and the shades of evening were closing in so fast that they warned me to hurry if I would reach the town before dark. I had just finished it, and was stooping to pick up my air-gun, when I heard a

sudden rush, and before I had time to look up, I was thrown violently forward on my face, and found myself struggling in the embrace of a powerful grasp, from which I had nearly succeeded in freeing myself, when the arms which were clasping me were reinforced by several more pair, and I felt a rope being passed round my body.

"All right, signors!" I exclaimed; "I yield to superior numbers. You need not pull so hard; let me get up, and I promise to go with you quietly." And by this time I had turned sufficiently on my back to see that four men were engaged in tying me up.

"Tie his elbows together, and let him get up," said one; "he is not armed. Here, Giuseppe, carry his stick and paint-box, while I feel his pockets. *Corpo di Bacchо!* twelve *bajocchi*," he exclaimed, producing those copper coins with an air of profound disgust. "It is to be hoped he is worth more to his friends. Now, young man, trudge, and remember that the first sign you make of attempting to run away, means four bullets through you."

As I did not anticipate any real danger, and as a prolonged detention was a matter

of no consequence to a man without an occupation, I stepped forward with a light heart, rather pleased than otherwise with anticipations of the brigand's cave, and turning over in my mind whether or not I should propose to join the band.

We had walked an hour, and it had become dark, when we turned off the road, up a narrow path that led between rocky sides to a glade, at the extremity of which, under an overhanging ledge, was a small cottage, with what seemed to be a patch of garden in front.

"Ho! Anita!" called out the man who appeared to be the leader of the band; "open! We have brought a friend to supper, who will require a night's lodgings."

An old woman with a light appeared, and over her shoulder, to my delight, I saw the face I had asked to be allowed to paint so shortly before. I was about to recognise her with an exclamation, when I saw a hurried motion of her finger to her lip, which looked a natural gesture to the casual observer, but which I construed into a sign of prudence.

"Where did you pick him up, Croppo?"

she asked carelessly. "He ought to be worth something."

"Just twelve *bajocchi*," he answered with a sneering laugh. "Come, *amico mio*, you will have to give us the names of some of your friends."

"I am tolerably intimate with his Holiness the Pope, and I have a bowing acquaintance with the King of Naples, whom may God speedily restore to his own," I replied in a light and airy fashion, which seemed exceedingly to exasperate the man called Croppo.

"Oh yes, we know all about that; we never catch a man who does not profess to be a *Nero* of the deepest dye in order to conciliate our sympathies. It is just as well that you should understand, my friend, that all are fish who come into our net. The money of the Pope's friends is quite as good as the money of Garibaldi's. You need not hope to put us off with your Italian friends of any colour: what we want is English gold —good solid English gold, and plenty of it."

"Ah," said I, with a laugh, "if you did but know, my friend, how long I have wanted it too. If you could only suggest an English-

man who would pay you for my life, I would write to him immediately, and we would go halves in the ransom. Hold!" I said, a bright idea suddenly striking me; "suppose I were to write to my Government—how would that do?"

Croppo was evidently puzzled: my cheerful and unembarrassed manner apparently perplexed him. He had a suspicion that I was even capable of the audacity of making a fool of him, and yet that proposition about the Government rather staggered him. There might be something in it.

"Don't you think," he remarked grimly; "it would add to the effect of your communication if you were to enclose your own ears in your letter? I can easily supply them; and if you are not a little more guarded in your speech, you may possibly have to add your tongue."

"It would not have the slightest effect," I replied, paying no heed to this threat; "you don't know Palmerston as I do. If you wish to get anything out of him you must be excessively civil. What does he care about my ears?" And I laughed with such scornful contempt that Croppo this time felt that he

had made a fool of himself; and I observed the lovely girl behind, while the corners of her mouth twitched with suppressed laughter, make a sign of caution.

"*Per Dio!*" he exclaimed, jumping up with fury, "understand, Signor Inglese, that Croppo is not to be trifled with. I have a summary way of treating disrespect," and he drew a long and exceedingly sharp-looking two-edged knife.

"So you would kill the goose"—and I certainly am a goose, I reflected—"that may lay a golden egg." But my allusion was lost upon him, and I saw my charmer touch her forehead significantly, as though to imply to Croppo that I was weak in the upper storey.

"An imbecile without friends and twelve *bajocchi* in his pocket," he muttered savagely. "Perhaps the night without food will restore his senses. Come, fool!" and he roughly pushed me into a dark little chamber adjoining. "Here, Valeria, hold the light."

So Valeria was the name of the heroine of the donkey episode. As she held a small oil-lamp aloft, I perceived that the room in which I was to spend the night had more

the appearance of a cellar than a chamber; it had been excavated on two sides from the bank, on the third there was a small hole about six inches square, apparently communicating with another room, and on the fourth was the door by which I had entered, and which opened into the kitchen and general living-room of the inhabitants. There was a heap of onions running to seed, the fagots of firewood which Valeria had brought that afternoon, and an old cask or two.

"Won't you give him some kind of a bed?" she asked Croppo.

"Bah! he can sleep on the onions," responded that worthy. "If he had been more civil and intelligent he should have had something to eat. You three," he went on, turning to the other men, "sleep in the kitchen, and watch that the prisoner does not escape. The door has a strong bolt besides. Come, Valeria."

And the pair disappeared, leaving me in a dense gloom, strongly pervaded by an odour of fungus and decaying onions. Groping into one of the casks, I found some straw, and spreading it on a piece of plank, I prepared to pass the night sitting with my back

to the driest piece of wall I could find, which happened to be immediately under the air-hole, a fortunate circumstance, as the closeness was often stifling. I had probably been dozing for some time in a sitting position, when I felt something tickle the top of my head. The idea that it might be a large spider caused me to start, when stretching up my hand, it came in contact with what seemed to be a rag, which I had not observed. Getting carefully up, I perceived a faint light gleaming through the aperture, and then saw that a hand was protruded through it, apparently waving the rag. As I felt instinctively that the hand was Valeria's, I seized the finger-tips, which was all I could get hold of, and pressed them to my lips. They were quickly drawn away, and then the whisper reached my ears—

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes."

"Then eat this," and she passed me a tin pannikin full of cold macaroni, which would just go through the opening.

"Dear Valeria," I said, with my mouth full, "how good and thoughtful you are!"

"Hush! he'll hear."

"Who?"

"Croppo."

"Where is he?"

"Asleep in the bed just behind me."

"How do you come to be in his bedroom?"

"Because I'm his wife."

"Oh!" A long pause during which I collapsed upon my straw seat, and swallowed macaroni thoughtfully. As the result of my meditations—"Valeria *carissima*."

"Hush! Yes."

"Can't you get me out of this infernal den?"

"Perhaps, if they all three sleep in the kitchen; at present one is awake. Watch for my signal, and if they all three sleep, I will manage to slip the bolt. Then you must give me time to get back into bed, and when you hear me snore you may make the attempt. They are all three sleeping on the floor, so be very careful where you tread; I will also leave the front door a little open, so that you can slip through without noise."

"Dearest Valeria!"

"Hush! Yes."

"Hand me that cane—it is my fishing-rod, you know—through this hole; you can leave

the sketch-book and paint-box under the tree that the donkey fell against,—I will call for them some day soon. And, Valeria, don't you think we could make our lips meet through this beastly hole?"

"Impossible. There's my hand; heavens! Croppo would murder me if he knew. Now keep quiet till I give the signal. Oh, do let go my hand!"

"Remember, Valeria, *bellissima*, *carissima*, whatever happens, that I love you."

But I don't think she heard this, and I went and sat on the onions because I could see the hole better, and the smell of them kept me awake.

It was at least two hours after this that the faint light appeared at the hole in the wall, and a hand was pushed through. I rushed at the finger-tips.

"Here's your fishing-rod," she said when I had released them, and she had passed me my air-gun. "Now be very careful how you tread. There is one asleep across the door, but you can open it about two feet. Then step over him; then make for a gleam of moonlight that comes through the crack of the front door, open it very gently and slip

out. *Addio, caro Inglese;* mind you wait till you hear me snoring."

Then she lingered, and I heard a sigh.

"What is it, sweet Valeria?" and I covered her hand with kisses.

"I wish Croppo had blue eyes like you."

This was murmured so softly that I may have been mistaken, but I'm nearly sure that was what she said; then she drew softly away, and two minutes afterwards I heard her snoring. As the first sound issued from her lovely nostrils, I stealthily approached the door, gently pushed it open; stealthily stepped over a space which I trusted cleared the recumbent figure that I could not see; cleared him; stole gently on for the streak of moonlight; trod squarely on something that seemed like an outstretched hand, for it gave under my pressure and produced a yell; felt that I must now rush for my life; dashed the door open, and down the path with four yelling ruffians at my heels. I was a pretty good runner, but the moon was behind a cloud, and the way was rocky,—moreover, there must have been a short cut I did not know, for one of my pursuers gained upon me with unaccountable rapidity—he appeared

suddenly within ten yards of my heels. The others were at least a hundred yards behind. I had nothing for it but to turn round, let him almost run against the muzzle of my air-gun, pull the trigger, and see him fall in his tracks. It was the work of a second, but it checked my pursuers. They had heard no noise, but they found something that they did not bargain for, and lingered a moment, then they took up the chase with redoubled fury. But I had too good a start; and where the path joined the main road, instead of turning down towards the town, as they expected I would, I dodged round in the opposite direction, the uncertain light this time favouring me, and I heard their footsteps and their curses dying away on the wrong track. Nevertheless I ran on at full speed, and it was not till the day was dawning that I began to feel safe and relax my efforts. The sun had been up an hour when I reached a small town, and the little *locanda* was just opening for the day when I entered it, thankful for a hot cup of coffee, and a dirty little room, with a dirtier bed, where I could sleep off the fatigue and excitement of the night. I was strolling down almost the only street

in the afternoon when I met a couple of carabineers riding into it, and shortly after encountered the whole troop, to my great delight, in command of an intimate friend whom I had left a month before in Naples.

"Ah, *caro mio!*" he exclaimed, when he saw me, "well met. What on earth are you doing here?—looking for those brigands you were so anxious to find when you left Naples? Considering that you are in the heart of their country, you should not have much difficulty in gratifying your curiosity."

"I have had an adventure or two," I replied carelessly. "Indeed that is partly the reason you find me here. I was just thinking how I could get safely back to Ascoli, when your welcome escort appeared; for I suppose you are going there, and will let me take advantage of it."

"Only too delighted; and you can tell me your adventures. Let us dine together to-night, and I will find you a horse to ride on with us in the morning."

I am afraid my account of the episode with which I have acquainted the reader was not strictly accurate in all its details, as I did not wish to bring down my military friends on

poor Valeria, so I skipped all allusion to her and my detention in her home; merely saying that I had had a scuffle with brigands, and had been fortunate enough to escape under cover of the night. As we passed it next morning I recognised the path which led up to Valeria's cottage, and shortly after observed that young woman herself coming up the glen.

"Holloa!" I said, with great presence of mind as she drew near, "my lovely model, I declare! Just you ride on, old fellow, while I stop and ask her when she can come and sit to me again."

"You artists are sad rogues,—what chances your profession must give you!" remarked my companion, as he cast an admiring glance on Valeria, and rode discreetly on.

"There is nothing to be afraid of, lovely Valeria," I said in a low tone, as I lingered behind; "be sure I will never betray either you or your rascally—hem! I mean your excellent Croppo. By the way, was that man much hurt that I was obliged to trip up?"

"Hurt! Santa Maria, he is dead, with a bullet through his heart. Croppo says it must have been magic; for he had searched

you, and he knew you were not armed, and he was within a hundred yards of you when poor Pippo fell, and he heard no sound."

"Croppo is not far wrong," I said, glad of the opportunity thus offered of imposing on the ignorance and credulity of the natives. "He seemed surprised that he could not frighten me the other night. Tell him he was much more in my power than I was in his, dear Valeria," I added, looking tenderly into her eyes. "I didn't want to alarm you, that was the reason I let him off so easily; but I may not be so merciful next time. Now, sweetest, that kiss you owe me, and which the wall prevented your giving me the other night." She held up her face with the innocence of a child, as I stooped from my saddle.

"I shall never see you again, Signor Inglese," she said, with a sigh; "for Croppo says it is not safe, after what happened the night before last, to stay another hour. Indeed he went off yesterday, leaving me orders to follow to-day; but I went first to put your sketch-book under the bush where the donkey fell, and where you will find it."

It took us another minute or two to part

after this; and when I had ridden away I turned to look back, and there was Valeria gazing after me. "Positively," I reflected, "I am over head and ears in love with the girl, and I believe she is with me. I ought to have nipped my feelings in the bud when she told me she was his wife; but then he is a brigand, who threatened both my ears and my tongue, to say nothing of my life. To what extent is the domestic happiness of such a ruffian to be respected?" and I went on splitting the moral straws suggested by this train of thought, until I had recovered my sketch-book and overtaken my escort, with whom I rode triumphantly back into Ascoli, where my absence had been the cause of much anxiety, and my fate was even then being eagerly discussed. My friends with whom I usually sat round the chemist's door, were much exercised by the reserve which I manifested in reply to the fire of cross-examination to which I was subjected for the next few days; and English eccentricity, which was proverbial even in this secluded town, received a fresh illustration in the light and airy manner with which I treated a capture and escape from brigands, which I re-

garded with such indifference that I could not be induced even to condescend to details. "It was a mere scuffle; there were only four; and, being an Englishman, I polished them all off with the 'box,'"—and I closed my fist, and struck a scientific attitude of self-defence, branching off into a learned disquisition on the pugilistic art, which filled my hearers with respect and amazement. From this time forward the sentiment with which I regarded my air-gun underwent a change. When a friend had made me a present of it a year before, I regarded it in the light of a toy, and rather resented the gift as too juvenile. I wonder he did not give me a kite or a hoop, I mentally reflected. Then I had found it useful among Italians, who are a trifling people, and like playthings; but now that it had saved my life, and sent a bullet through a man's heart, I no longer entertained the same feeling of contempt for it. Not again would I make light of it,—this potent engine of destruction which had procured me the character of being a magician. I would hide it from human gaze, and cherish it as a sort of fetish. So I bought a walking-stick and an umbrella, and strapped it up with them, wrapped in my

plaid; and when, shortly after, an unexpected remittance from an aunt supplied me with money enough to buy a horse from one of the officers of my friend's regiment, which soon after arrived, I accepted their invitation to accompany them on their brigand-hunting expeditions, not one of them knew that I had such a weapon as an air-gun in my possession.

Our *modus operandi* on these occasions was as follows: On receiving information from some proprietor that the brigands were threatening his property,—it was impossible to get intelligence from the peasantry, for they were all in league with the brigands; indeed they all took a holiday from regular work, and joined a band for a few weeks from time to time,—we proceeded, with a force sufficiently strong to cope with the supposed strength of the band, to the farm in question. The bands were all mounted, and averaged from 200 to 400 men each. It was calculated that upwards of 2000 men were thus engaged in harrying the country, and this enabled the *Neri* to talk of the king's forces engaged in legitimate warfare against those of Victor Emmanuel. Riding over the vast plains of

the Capitanata, we would discern against the sky-outline the figure of a solitary horseman. This we knew to be a picket. Then there was no time to be lost, and away we would go for him helter-skelter across the plain; he would instantly gallop in on the main body, probably occupying a *masseria*. If they thought they were strong enough, they would show fight. If not, they would take to their heels in the direction of the mountains, with us in full cry after them. If they were hardly pressed they would scatter, and we were obliged to do the same, and the result would be that the swiftest horsemen might possibly effect a few captures. It was an exciting species of warfare, partaking a good deal more of the character of a hunting-field than of cavalry skirmishing. Sometimes, where the ground was hilly, we had Bersaglieri with us; and as the brigands took to the mountains, the warfare assumed a different character. Sometimes, in default of these active little troops, we took local volunteers, whom we found a very poor substitute. On more than one occasion when we came upon the brigands in a farm, they thought themselves sufficiently strong to hold it

against us, and once the cowardice of the volunteers was amusingly illustrated. The band was estimated at about 200, and we had 100 volunteers and a detachment of 50 cavalry. On coming under the fire of the brigands, the cavalry captain, who was in command, ordered the volunteers to charge, intending when they had dislodged the enemy to ride him down on the open; but the volunteer officer did not repeat the word, and stood stock-still, his men all imitating his example.

"Charge! I say," shouted the cavalry captain; "why don't you charge? I believe you're afraid!"

"*E vero*," said the captain of volunteers, shrugging his shoulders.

"Here, take my horse—you're only fit to be a groom; and you, men, dismount and let these cowards hold your horses, while you follow me,"—and jumping from his horse, the gallant fellow, followed by his men, charged the building, from which a hot fire was playing upon them, sword in hand. In less than a quarter of an hour the brigands were scampering, some on foot and some on horseback, out of the farm-buildings, followed by a few

stray and harmless shots from such of the volunteers as had their hands free. We lost three men killed and five wounded in this little skirmish, and killed six of the brigands, besides making a dozen prisoners. When I say we, I mean my companions; for having no weapon, I had discreetly remained with the volunteers. The scene of this gallant exploit was on the classic battle-field of Cannæ. This captain, who was not the friend I had joined the day after my brigand adventure, was a most plucky and dashing cavalry officer, and was well seconded by his men, who were all Piedmontese, and of very different temperament from the Neapolitans. On one occasion a band of 250 brigands waited for us on the top of a small hill, never dreaming that we should charge up it with the odds five to one against us—but we did; and after firing a volley at us, which emptied a couple of saddles, they broke and fled when we were about twenty yards from them. Then began one of the most exciting scurries across country it was ever my fortune to be engaged in. The brigands scattered—so did we; and I found myself with two troopers in chase of a pair of bandits, one of whom seemed to be the

chief of the band. A small stream wound through the plain, which we dashed across. Just beyond was a tributary ditch, which would have been considered a fair jump in the hunting-field: both brigands took it in splendid style. The hindmost was not ten yards ahead of the leading trooper, who came a cropper, on which the brigand reined up, fired a pistol-shot into the prostrate horse and man, and was off: but the delay cost him dear. The other trooper, who was a little ahead of me, got safely over. I followed suit. In another moment he had fired his carbine into the brigand's horse, and down they both came by the run. We instantly reined up, for I saw there was no chance of overtaking the remaining brigand, and the trooper was in the act of cutting down the man as he struggled to his feet, when to my horror I recognised the lovely features of—Valeria.

"Stay, man!" I shouted, throwing myself from my horse; "it's a woman! touch her if you dare!" and then seeing the man's eye gleam with indignation, I added, "Brave soldiers, such as you have proved yourself to be, do not kill women; though your traducers say you do, do not give them cause to speak

truth. I will be responsible for this woman's safety. Here, to make it sure, you had better strap us together." I piqued myself exceedingly on this happy inspiration, whereby I secured an arm-in-arm walk, of a peculiar kind it is true, with Valeria, and indeed my readiness to sacrifice myself seemed rather to astonish the soldier, who hesitated. However, his comrade, whose horse had been shot in the ditch, now came up, and seconded my proposal, as I offered him a mount on mine.

"How on earth am I to let you escape, dear Valeria?" I whispered, giving her a sort of affectionate nudge: the position of our arms prevented my squeezing hers, as I could have wished, and the two troopers kept behind us, watching us, I thought, suspiciously.

"It is quite impossible now—don't attempt it," she answered; "perhaps there may be an opportunity later."

"Was that Croppo who got away?" I asked.

"Yes. He could not get his cowardly men to stand on that hill."

"What a bother those men are behind, dearest! Let me pretend to scratch my nose with this hand that is tied to yours, which I can thus bring to my lips."

I accomplished this manœuvre rather neatly, but parties now came straggling in from other directions, and I was obliged to give up whispering and become circumspect. They all seemed rather astonished at our group, and the captain laughed heartily as he rode up and called out, "Who have you got tied to you there, *caro mio?*"

"Croppo's wife. I had her tied to me for fear she should escape; besides, she is not bad-looking."

"What a prize!" he exclaimed. "We have made a tolerable haul this time,—twenty prisoners in all—among them the priest of the band. Our colonel has just arrived, so I am in luck—he will be delighted. See, the prisoners are being brought up to him now: but you had better remount and present yours in a less singular fashion."

When we reached the colonel we found him examining the priest. His breviary contained various interesting notes, written on some of the fly-leaves.

For instance:—

"Administered extreme unction to A——, shot by Croppo's orders: my share ten *scudi*.

"Ditto, ditto, to R——, hung by Croppo's order; my share two *scudi.*

"Ditto, ditto, to S——, roasted by Croppo's order, to make him name an agent to bring his ransom: overdone by mistake, and died—so got nothing.

"Ditto, ditto, to P——, executed by the knife by Croppo's order, for disobedience.

"M—— and F——, and D——, three new members, joined to-day: confessed them, and received the usual fees."

He was a dark, beetle-browed-looking ruffian, this holy man; and the colonel, when he had finished examining his book of prayer and crime, tossed it to me, saying,—"There! that will show your friends in England the kind of politicians we make war against. Ha! what have we here? This is more serious." And he unfolded a piece of paper which had been concealed in the breast of the priest. "This contains a little valuable information," he added, with a grim smile. "Nobody like priests and women for carrying about political secrets, so you may have made a valuable capture," and he turned to where I stood with Valeria; "let her be carefully searched."

Now the colonel was a very pompous man,

and the document he had just discovered on the priest added to his sense of self-importance. When, therefore, a large, carefully folded paper was produced from the neighbourhood of Valeria's lovely bosom, his eyes sparkled with anticipation. "Ho, ho!" he exclaimed, as he clutched it eagerly, "the plot is thickening!" and he spread out triumphantly, before he had himself seen what it was, the exquisitely drawn portrait of a donkey. There was a suppressed titter, which exploded into a shout when the bystanders looked into the colonel's indignant face. I only was affected differently, as my gaze fell upon this touching evidence of dear Valeria's love for me, and I glanced at her tenderly. "This has a deeper significance than you think for," said the colonel, looking round angrily. "Croppo's wife does not carefully secrete a drawing like that on her person for nothing. See, it is done by no common artist. It means something, and must be preserved."

"It may have a Biblical reference to the state of Italy. You remember Issachar was likened to an ass between two burdens. In that case it probably emanated from Rome,"

I remarked; but nobody seemed to see the point of the allusion, and the observation fell flat.

That night I dined with the colonel, and after dinner I persuaded him to let me visit Valeria in prison, as I wished to take the portrait of the wife of the celebrated brigand chief. I thanked my stars that my friend who had seen her when we met in the glen, was away on duty with his detachment, and could not testify to our former acquaintance.

My meeting with Valeria on this occasion was too touching and full of tender passages to be of any general interest. Valeria told me that she was still a bride; that she had only been married a few months, and that she had been compelled to become Croppo's wife against her choice, as the brigand's will was too powerful to be resisted; but that, though he was jealous and attached to her, he was stern and cruel, and so far from winning her love since her marriage, he had rather estranged it by his fits of passion and ferocity. As may be imagined, the portrait, which was really very successful, took some time in execution, the more especially as we had to discuss the possibilities of Valeria's escape.

"We are going to be transferred to-morrow to the prison at Foggia," she said. "If, while we were passing through the market-place, a disturbance of some sort could be created, as it is market-day, and all the country people know me, and are my friends, a rescue might be attempted. I know how to arrange for that, only they must see some chance of success."

A bright thought suddenly struck me; it was suggested by a trick I had played shortly after my arrival in Italy.

"You know I am something of a magician, Valeria; you have had proof of that. If I create a disturbance by magic to-morrow, when you are passing through the market-place, you won't stay to wonder what is the cause of the confusion, but instantly take advantage of it to escape."

"Trust me for that, *caro mio*."

"And if you escape, when shall we meet again?"

"I am known too well now to risk another meeting. I shall be in hiding with Croppo, where it will be impossible for you to find me, nor while he lives could I ever dare to think of leaving him; but I shall never forget

you "—and she pressed my hands to her lips —"though I shall no longer have the picture of the donkey to remember you by."

"See, here's my photograph; that will be better," said I, feeling a little annoyed—foolishly, I admit. Then we strained each other to our respective hearts, and parted. Now it so happened that my room in the *locanda* in which I was lodging overlooked the market-place. Here at ten o'clock in the morning I posted myself—for that was the hour, as I had been careful to ascertain, when the prisoners were to start for Foggia. I opened the window about three inches, and fixed it there: I took out my gun, put eight balls in it, and looked down upon the square. It was crowded with the country people in their bright-coloured costumes, chaffering over their produce. I looked above them to the tall campanile of the church which filled one side of the square. I receded a step and adjusted my gun on the ledge of the window to my entire satisfaction. I then looked down the street in which the prison was situated, and which debouched on the square, and awaited events. At ten minutes past ten I saw the soldiers at the door of the

prison form up, and then I knew that the twenty prisoners of whom they formed the escort were starting; but the moment they began to move, I fired at the big bell in the campanile, which responded with a loud clang. All the people in the square looked up. As the prisoners entered the square, which they had to cross in its whole breadth, I fired again and again. The bell banged twice, and the people began to buzz about. Now, I thought, I must let the old bell have it. By the time five more balls had struck the bell with a resounding din, the whole square was in commotion. A miracle was evidently in progress, or the campanile was bewitched. People began to run hither and thither; all the soldiers forming the escort gaped open-mouthed at the steeple as the clangour continued. As soon as the last shot had been fired, I looked down into the square and saw all this, and I saw that the prisoners were attempting to escape, and in more than one instance had succeeded, for the soldiers began to scatter in pursuit, and the country people to form themselves into impeding crowds, as though by accident, but nowhere could I see Valeria. When I was quite sure she had escaped, I

went down and joined the crowd. I saw three prisoners captured and brought back; and when I asked the officer in command how many had escaped, he said three—Croppo's wife, the priest, and another.

When I met my cavalry friends at dinner that evening, it was amusing to hear them speculate upon the remarkable occurrence which had, in fact, upset the wits of the whole town. Priests and vergers and sacristans had visited the campanile, and one of them had brought away a flattened piece of lead, which looked as if it might have been a bullet; but the suggestion that eight bullets could have hit the bell in succession without anybody hearing a sound, was treated with ridicule. I believe the bell was subsequently exorcised with holy water. I was afraid to remain with the regiment with my air-gun after this, lest some one should discover it, and unravel the mystery; besides, I felt a sort of traitor to the brave friends who had so generously offered me their hospitality, so I invented urgent private affairs, which demanded my immediate return to Naples, and on the morning of my departure found myself embraced by all the officers of the regiment,

from the colonel downwards, who, in the fervour of their kisses, thrust sixteen waxed moustache-points against my cheeks.

About eighteen months after this, I heard of the capture and execution of Croppo, and I knew that Valeria was free; but I had unexpectedly inherited a property, and was engaged to be married. I am now a country gentleman with a large family. My sanctum is stocked with various mementoes of my youthful adventures, but none awakens in me such thrilling memories as are excited by the breviary of the brigand priest, and the portrait of the brigand's bride.

THE SISTERS OF THIBET.

IT is now nearly twenty-seven years ago—long before the Theosophical Society was founded, or Esoteric Buddhism was known to exist in the form recently revealed to us by Mr Sinnett[1]—that I became the *chela*, or pupil, of an adept of Buddhist occultism in Khatmandhu. At that time Englishmen, unless attached to the Residency, were not permitted to reside in that picturesque Nepaulese town. Indeed I do not think that they are now; but I had had an opportunity during the Indian Mutiny, when I was attached to the Nepaulese contingent, of forming an intimacy with a "Guru" connected with the force. It was not until our acquaintance had ripened into a warm friend-

[1] Esoteric Buddhism. By A. P. Sinnett, President of the Simla Eclectic Theosophical Society.

ship that I gradually made the discovery that this interesting man held views which differed so widely from the popular conception of Buddhism as I had known it in Ceylon—where I had resided for some years—that my curiosity was roused,—the more especially as he was in the habit of sinking off gradually, even while I was speaking to him, into trance-conditions, which would last sometimes for a week, during which time he would remain without food; and upon more than one occasion I missed even his material body from my side, under circumstances which appeared to me at the time unaccountable. The Nepaulese troops were not very often engaged with the rebels during the Indian Mutiny; but when they were, the Guru was always to be seen under the hottest fire, and it was generally supposed by the army that his body, so far from being impervious to bullets, was so pervious to them that they could pass through it without producing any organic disturbance. I was not aware of this fact at first; and it was not until I observed that, while he stood directly in the line of fire, men were killed immediately behind him, that I ceased to accompany him into

action, and determined, if possible, to solve a mystery which had begun to stimulate my curiosity to the highest pitch. It is not necessary for me to enter here into the nature of the conversations I had with him on the most important and vital points affecting universal cosmogony and the human race and its destiny. Suffice it to say, that they determined me to sever my connection with the Government of India; to apply privately, through my friend the Guru, to the late Jung Bahadoor for permission to reside in Nepaul; and finally, in the garb of an Oriental, to take up my residence in Khatmandhu, unknown to the British authorities. I should not now venture on this record of my experiences, or enter upon the revelation of a phase hitherto unknown and unsuspected, of that esoteric science which has, until now, been jealously guarded as a precious heritage belonging exclusively to regularly initiated members of mysteriously organised associations, had not Mr Sinnett, with the consent of a distinguished member of the Thibetan brotherhood, and, in fact, at his dictation, let, if I may venture to use so profane an expression in connection with such a sacred subject,

"the cat out of the bag." Since, however, the *arhats*, or illuminati, of the East, seem to have arrived at the conclusion that the Western mind is at last sufficiently prepared and advanced in spiritual knowledge to be capable of assimilating the occult doctrines of Esoteric Buddhism, and have allowed their pupil to burst them upon a thoughtless and frivolous society with the suddenness of a bomb-shell, I feel released from the obligations to secrecy by which I have hitherto felt bound, and will proceed to unfold a few arcana of a far more extraordinary character than any which are to be found even in the pages of the 'Theosophist' or of 'Esoteric Buddhism.'

Owing to certain conditions connected with my *linga sharira*, or "astral body"—which it would be difficult for me to explain to those who are not to some extent initiated — I passed through the various degrees of *chela*-ship with remarkable rapidity. When I say that in less than fifteen years of spiritual absorption and profound contemplation of esoteric mysteries I became a *mahatma*, or adept, some idea may be formed by *chelas* who are now treading that path of severe

ordeal, of the rapidity of my progress: indeed, such extraordinary faculty did I manifest, that at one time the Guru, my master, was inclined to think that I was one of those exceptional cases which recur from time to time, where a child-body is selected as the human tenement of a reincarnated adept; and that though belonging by rights to the fourth round, I was actually born into the fifth round of the human race in the planetary chain. "The adept," says an occult aphorism, "becomes; he is not made." That was exactly my case. I attribute it principally to an overweening confidence in myself, and to a blind faith in others. As Mr Sinnett very properly remarks—

"Very much further than people generally imagine, will mere confidence carry the occult neophyte. How many European readers who would be quite incredulous if told of some results which occult *chelas* in the most incipient stages of their training have to accomplish by sheer force of confidence, hear constantly in church, nevertheless, the familiar Biblical assurances of the power which resides in faith, and let the words pass by like the wind, leaving no impression!"

It is true that I had some reason for this confidence—which arose from the fact that prior to my initiation into Buddhist mysteries,

and before I left England, I had developed, under the spiritual craze which was then prevalent in society, a remarkable faculty of clairvoyance. This gave me the power not merely of diagnosing the physical and moral conditions of my friends and acquaintances, and of prescribing for them when necessary, but of seeing what was happening in other parts of the world; hence my organism was peculiarly favourable for initiation into occult mysteries, and naturally—or rather spiritually—prepared for that method in the regular course of occult training by which adepts impart instruction to their pupils.

"They awaken," as we are most accurately informed by Mr Sinnett, "the dormant sense in the pupil, and through this they imbue his mind with a knowledge that such and such a doctrine is the real truth. The whole scheme of evolution infiltrates into the regular *chela's* mind, by reason of the fact that he is made to see the process taking place by clairvoyant vision. There are no words used in his instruction at all. And adepts themselves, to whom the facts and processes of nature are as familiar as our five fingers to us, find it difficult to explain in a treatise which they cannot illustrate for us, by producing mental pictures in our dormant sixth sense, the complex anatomy of the planetary system."

I have always felt—and my conviction on

the subject has led to some painful discussions between myself and some of my *mahatma* brothers—that the extreme facility with which I was enabled to perceive at a glance "the complex anatomy of the planetary system," and the rapid development of my "dormant sixth sense," was due mainly to the fact that I was nothing more nor less than what spiritualists call a highly sensitive medium. Meantime this premature development of my sixth sense forced me right up through the obstacles which usually impede such an operation in the case of a fourth-round man, into that stage of evolution which awaits the rest of humanity—or rather, so much of humanity as may reach it in the ordinary course of nature—in the latter part of the fifth round.

I merely mention this to give confidence to my readers, as I am about to describe a moral cataclysm which subsequently took place in my sixth sense, which would be of no importance in the case of an ordinary *chela*, but which was attended with the highest significance as occurring to a *mahatma* who had already attained the highest grade in the mystic brotherhood. It was not to be wondered at that when I arrived at this advanced

condition, Khatmandhu, though a pleasant town, was not altogether a convenient residence for an occultist of my eminence. In the first place, the streets were infested with *dugpas*, or red-caps, a heretical sect, some members of which have *arhat* pretensions of a very high order—indeed I am ready to admit that I have met with Shammar adepts, who, so far as supernatural powers were concerned, were second to none among ourselves. But this was only the result of that necromancy which Buddha in his sixth incarnation denounced in the person of Tsong-kha-pa, the great reformer. They even deny the spiritual supremacy of the Dalai Lama at Lhassa, and own allegiance to an impostor who lives at the monastery of Sakia Djong.

The presence of these men, and the presumption of their adepts, who maintained that through subjective or clairvoyant conditions, which they asserted were higher than ours, they had attained a more exalted degree of illumination which revealed a different cosmogony from that which has been handed down to us through countless generations of adepts, were a perpetual annoyance to me;

but perhaps not greater than the proximity of the English Resident and the officers attached to him, the impure exhalations from whose *rupas*, or material bodies, infected as they were with magnetic elements drawn from Western civilisation, whenever I met them, used to send me to bed for a week. I therefore strongly felt the necessity of withdrawal to that isolated and guarded region where the most advanced adepts can pursue their contemplative existence without fear of interruption, and prepare their *karma*, or, in other words, the molecules of their fifth principle, for the ineffable bliss of appropriate development in *devachan*—a place, or rather "state," somewhat resembling Purgatory with a dash of heaven in it; or even for the still more exquisite sensation which arises from having no sensations at all, and which characterises *nirvana*, or a sublime condition of conscious rest in Omniscience.

That I am not drawing upon my imagination in alluding to this mysterious region, or imposing upon the credulity of my readers, I will support my assertion by the high authority of Mr Sinnett, or rather of his Guru; and here I may remark incidentally,

that after a long experience of Gurus, I have never yet met one who would consciously tell a lie.

"From time immemorial," says Mr Sinnett's Guru, "there has been a certain region in Thibet, which to this day is quite unknown to and unapproachable by any but initiated persons, and inaccessible to the ordinary people of the country, as to any others, in which adepts have always congregated. But the country generally was not in Buddha's time, as it has since become, the chosen habitation of the great brotherhood. Much more than they are at present, were the *mahatmas* in former times distributed throughout the world.

"The progress of civilisation engendering the magnetism they find so trying, had, however, by the date with which we are now dealing—the fourteenth century—already given rise to a very general movement towards Thibet on the part of the previously dissociated occultists. Far more widely than was held to be consistent with the safety of mankind was occult knowledge and power then found to be disseminated. To the task of putting it under a rigid system of rule and law did Tsong-kha-pa address himself."

Of course, before transferring my material body to this region, I was perfectly familiar with it by reason of the faculty which, as Mr Sinnett very truly tells us, is common to all adepts, of being able to flit about the world at will in your astral body; and here I would

remark parenthetically, that I shall use the term "astral body" to save confusion, though, as Mr Sinnett again properly says, it is not strictly accurate under the circumstances. In order to make this clear, I will quote his very lucid observations on the subject:—

"During the last year or two, while hints and scraps of occult science have been finding their way out into the world, the expression 'astral body' has been applied to a certain semblance of the human form, fully inhabited by its higher principles, which can migrate to any distance from the physical body—projected consciously and with exact intention by a living adept, or unintentionally by the accidental application of certain mental forces to his loosened principles by any person at the moment of death. For ordinary purposes, there is no practical inconvenience in using the expression 'astral body' for the appearance so projected—indeed any more strictly accurate expression, as will be seen directly, would be cumbersome, and we must go on using the phrase in both meanings. No confusion need arise; but strictly speaking, the *linga sharira*, or third principle, is the astral body, and that cannot be sent about as the vehicle of the higher principles."

As, however, "no confusion need arise" from my describing how I went about in my *linga sharira*, I will continue to use it as the term for my vehicle of transportation. Nor need there be any difficulty about my being in two

places at once. I have the authority of Mr Sinnett's Guru for this statement, and it is fully confirmed by my own experience. For what says the Guru?—"The individual consciousness, it is argued, cannot be in two places at once. But first of all, to a certain extent it can." It is unnecessary for me to add a word to this positive and most correct statement; but what the Guru has not told us is, that there is a certain discomfort attending the process. Whenever I went with my astral body, or *linga sharira*, into the mysterious region of Thibet already alluded to, leaving my *rupa*, or natural body, in Khatmandhu, I was always conscious of a feeling of rawness; while the necessity of looking after my *rupa*—of keeping, so to speak, my astral eye upon it, lest some accident should befall it, which might prevent my getting back to it, and so prematurely terminate my physical or objective existence—was a constant source of anxiety to me. Some idea of the danger which attends this process may be gathered from the risks incidental to a much more difficult operation which I once attempted, and succeeded, after incredible effort, in accomplishing; this was the passage of my fifth

principle, or ego-spirit, into the ineffable condition of *nirvana*.

"Let it not be supposed," says Mr Sinnett,—for it is not his Guru who is now speaking,—"that for any adept such a passage can be lightly undertaken. Only stray hints about the nature of this great mystery have reached me; but, putting these together, I believe I am right in saying that the achievement in question is one which only some of the high initiates are qualified to attempt, which exacts a total suspension of animation in the body for periods of time compared to which the longest cataleptic trances known to ordinary science are insignificant; the protection of the physical frame from natural decay during this period by means which the resources of occult science are strained to accomplish; and withal it is a process involving a double risk to the continued earthly life of the person who undertakes it. One of these risks is the doubt whether, when once *nirvana* is attained, the ego will be willing to return. That the return will be a terrible effort and sacrifice is certain, and will only be prompted by the most devoted attachment, on the part of the spiritual traveller, to the idea of duty in its purest abstraction. The second great risk is that of allowing the sense of duty to predominate over the temptation to stay—a temptation, be it remembered, that is not weakened by the motive that any conceivable penalty can attach to it. Even then it is always doubtful whether the traveller will be able to return."

All this is exactly as Mr Sinnett has described it. I shall never forget the struggle

that I had with my ego when, ignoring "the idea of duty in its purest abstraction," it refused to abandon the bliss of *nirvana* for the troubles of this mundane life; or the anxiety both of my *manas*, or human soul, and my *buddhi*, or spiritual soul, lest, after by our combined efforts we had overcome our ego, we should not be able to do our duty by our *rupa*, or natural body, and get back into it.

Of course, my migrations to the *mahatma* region of Thibet were accompanied by no such difficulty as this—as, to go with your *linga sharira*, or astral body, to another country, is a very different and much more simple process than it is to go with your *manas*, or human soul, into *nirvana*. Still it was a decided relief to find myself comfortably installed with my material body, or *rupa*, in the house of a Thibetan brother on that sacred soil which has for so many centuries remained unpolluted by a profane foot.

Here I passed a tranquil and contemplative existence for some years, broken only by such incidents as my passage into *nirvana*, and disturbed only by a certain subjective sensation of aching or void, by which I was occasionally attacked, and which I was finally

compelled to attribute, much to my mortification, to the absence of women. In the whole of this sacred region, the name of which I am compelled to withhold, there was not a single female. Everybody in it was given up to contemplation and ascetic absorption; and it is well known that profound contemplation, for any length of time, and the presence of the fair sex, are incompatible. I was much troubled by this vacuous sensation, which I felt to be in the highest degree derogatory to my fifth principle, and the secret of which I discovered, during a trance-condition which lasted for several months, to arise from a subtle magnetism, to which, owing to my peculiar organic condition, I was especially sensitive, and which penetrated the *mahatma* region from a tract of country almost immediately contiguous to it in the Karakorum Mountains, which was as jealously guarded from foreign intrusion as our own, and which was occupied by the "Thibetan Sisters," a body of female occultists of whom the Brothers never spoke except in terms of loathing and contempt. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that no mention is made either of them, or the lovely highland district they occupy, in Mr Sinnett's

book. The attraction of this feminine sphere became at last so overpowering, that I determined to visit it in my astral body; and now occurred the first of many most remarkable experiences which were to follow. It is well known to the initiated, though difficult to explain to those who are not, that in a sense space ceases to exist for the astral body. When you get out of your *rupa*, you are out of space as ordinary persons understand it, though it continues to have a certain subjective existence.

I was in this condition, and travelling rapidly in the desired direction, when I became conscious of the presence of the most exquisitely lovely female astral body which the imagination of man could conceive; and here I may incidentally remark, that no conception can be formed of the beauty to which woman can attain by those who have only seen her in her *rupa*—or, in other words, in the flesh. Woman's real charm consists in her *linga sharira*—that ethereal duplicate of the physical body which guides *jiva*, or the second principle, in its work on the physical particles, and causes it to build up the shape which these assume in the material. Some-

times it makes rather a failure of it, so far as the *rupa* is concerned, but it always retains its own fascinating contour and deliciously diaphanous composition undisturbed. When my gaze fell upon this most enchanting object, or rather subject—for I was in a subjective condition at the time—I felt all the senses appertaining to my third principle thrill with emotion ; but it seemed impossible—which will readily be understood by the initiated—to convey to her any clear idea of the admiration she excited, from the fact that we were neither of us in natural space. Still the sympathy between our *linga shariras* was so intense, that I perceived that I had only to go back for my *rupa*, and travel in it to the region of the sisterhood, to recognise her in her *rupa* at once.

Every *chela* even knows how impossible it is to make love satisfactorily in nothing but your *linga sharira*. It is quite different after you are dead, and have gone in your fourth principle, or *kama rupa*, which is often translated " body of desire," into *devachan ;* for, as Mr Sinnett most correctly remarks, " The purely sensual feelings and tastes of the late personality will drop off from it in *devachan ;*

but it does not follow that nothing is preservable in that state, except feelings and thoughts having a direct reference to religion or spiritual philosophy. On the contrary, all the superior phases, even of sensuous emotion, find their appropriate sphere of development in *devachan*." Until you are obliged to go to *devachan*—which, in ordinary parlance, is the place good men go to when they die—my advice is, stick to your *rupa;* and indeed it is the instinct of everybody who is not a *mahatma* to do this. I admit—though in making this confession I am aware that I shall incur the contempt of all *mahatmas*—that on this occasion I found my *rupa* a distinct convenience, and was not sorry that it was still in existence. In it I crossed the neutral zone still inhabited by ordinary Thibetans, and after a few days' travel, found myself on the frontiers of "the Sisters'" territory. The question which now presented itself was how to get in. To my surprise, I found the entrances guarded not by women, as I expected, but by men. These were for the most part young and handsome.

"So you imagined," said one, who advanced to meet me with an engaging air,

"that you could slip into our territory in your astral body; but you found that all the entrances *in vacuo*" — I use this word for convenience—"are as well guarded as those in space. See, here is the Sister past whom you attempted to force your way: we look after the physical frontier, and leave the astral or spiritual to the ladies," — saying which he politely drew back, and the apparition whose astral form I knew so well, now approached in her substantial *rupa*—in fact, she was a good deal stouter than I expected to find her; but I was agreeably surprised by her complexion, which was much fairer than is usual among Thibetans—indeed her whole type of countenance was Caucasian, which was not to be wondered at, considering, as I afterwards discovered, that she was by birth a Georgian. She greeted me, in the language common to all Thibetan occultists, as an old acquaintance, and one whose arrival was evidently expected—indeed she pointed laughingly to a bevy of damsels whom I now saw trooping towards us, some carrying garlands, some playing upon musical instruments, some dancing in lively measures, and singing their songs of welcome as they drew

near. Then Ushas—for that was the name (signifying "The Dawn") of the illuminata whose acquaintance I had first made *in vacuo* —taking me by the hand, led me to them, and said—

"Rejoice, O my sisters, at the long-anticipated arrival of the Western *arhat*, who, in spite of the eminence which he has attained in the mysteries of Esoteric Buddhism, and his intimate connection during so many years with the Thibetan fraternity, has yet retained enough of his original organic conditions to render him, even in the isolation of (here she mentioned the region I had come from) susceptible to the higher influence of the occult sisterhood. Receive him in your midst as the *chela* of a new avatar which will be unfolded to him under your tender guidance. Take him in your arms, O my sisters, and comfort him with the doctrines of Ila, the Divine, the Beautiful."

Taking me in their arms, I now found, was a mere formula or figure of speech, and consisted only in throwing garlands over me. Still I was much comforted, not merely by the grace and cordiality of their welcome, but by the mention of Ila, whose name will

doubtless be familiar to my readers as occurring in a Sanscrit poem of the age immediately following the Vedic period, called the Satapathabrahmana, when Manu was saved from the flood, and offered the sacrifice "to be the model of future generations." By this sacrifice he obtained a daughter named Ila, who became supernaturally the mother of humanity, and who, I had always felt, has been treated with too little consideration by the *mahatmas*—indeed her name is not so much as even mentioned in Mr Sinnett's book. Of course it was rather a shock to my spiritual pride, that I, a *mahatma* of eminence myself, should be told that I was to be adopted as a mere *chela* by these ladies; but I remembered those beautiful lines of Buddha's — I quote from memory — and I hesitated no longer :—

> "To be long-suffering and meek,
> To associate with the tranquil,
> Religious talk at due seasons;
> This is the greatest blessing."

"To be long-suffering"—this was a virtue I should probably have a splendid opportunity of displaying under the circumstances,—"and meek"; what greater proof of meekness could

I give than by becoming the *chela* of women? "To associate with the tranquil." I should certainly obey this precept, and select the most tranquil as my associates, and with them look forward to enjoying "religious talk at due seasons." Thus fortified by the precepts of the greatest of all teachers, my mind was at once made up, and, lifting up my voice, I chanted, in the language of the occult, some beautiful stanzas announcing my acceptance of their invitation, which evidently thrilled my hearers with delight. In order to save unnecessary fatigue, we now transferred ourselves through space, and, in the twinkling of an eye, I found myself in the enchanting abode which they called their home, or *dama*. Here a group of young male *chelas* were in waiting to attend to our wants; and the remarkable fact now struck me, that not only were all the women lovely and the men handsome, but that no trace of age was visible on any of them. Ushas smiled as she saw what was passing in my mind, and said, without using any spoken words, for language had already become unnecessary between us, "This is one of the mysteries which will be explained to you when you

have reposed after the fatigues of your journey; in the meantime Asvin," — and she pointed out a *chela* whose name signified "Twilight,"—"will show you to your room."

I would gladly linger, did my space allow, over the delights of this enchanting region, and the marvellously complete and well-organised system which prevailed in its curiously composed society. Suffice it to say, that in the fairy-like pavilion which was my home, dwelt twenty-four lovely Sisters and their twenty-three *chelas*—I was to make the twenty-fourth — in the most complete and absolute harmony, and that their lives presented the most charming combination of active industry, harmless gaiety, and innocent pleasures. By a proper distribution of work and proportionment of labour, in which all took part, the cultivation of the land, the tending of the exquisite gardens, with their plashing fountains, fragrant flowers, and inviting arbours, the herding of the cattle, and the heavier part of various handicrafts, fell upon the men; while the women looked after the domestic arrangements—cooked, made or mended and washed the *chelas'* clothes and their own (both men and women were dressed

according to the purest principles of æsthetic taste), looked after the dairy, and helped the men in the lighter parts of their industries.

Various inventions, known only to the occult sisterhood by means of their studies in the esoteric science of mechanics, contributed to shorten these labours to an extent which would be scarcely credited by the uninitiated; but some idea of their nature may be formed from the fact that methods of storing and applying electricity, unknown as yet in the West, have here been in operation for many centuries, while telephones, flying-machines, and many other contrivances still in their infancy with us, are carried to a high pitch of perfection. In a word, what struck me at once as the fundamental difference between this sisterhood and the fraternity of adepts with which I had been associated, was that the former turned all their occult experiences to practical account in their daily life in this world, instead of reserving them solely for the subjective conditions which are supposed by *mahatmas* to attach exclusively to another state of existence.

Owing to these appliances the heavy work of the day was got through usually in time

for a late breakfast, the plates and dishes being washed up and the knives cleaned by a mechanical process scarcely occupying two minutes; and the afternoon was usually devoted to the instruction of *chelas* in esoteric branches of learning, and their practical application to mundane affairs, until the cool of the evening, when parties would be made up either for playing out-of-door games, in the less violent of which the women took part, or in riding the beautiful horses of the country, or in flying swiftly over its richly cultivated and variegated surface, paying visits to other *damas* or homes, each of which was occupied on the same scale and in the same manner as our own. After a late dinner, we usually had concerts, balls, and private theatricals.

On the day following my arrival, Ushas explained to me the relationship in which we were to stand towards each other. She said that marriage was an institution as yet unknown to them, because their organisms had not yet attained the conditions to which they were struggling. They had progressed so far, however, that they had discovered the secret of eternal youth. Indeed, Ushas herself was 590 years old. I was not surprised at this, as

something of the same kind has occurred more than once to *rishis* or very advanced *mahatmas*. As a rule, however, they are too anxious to go to *nirvana*, to stay on earth a moment longer than necessary, and prefer rather to come back at intervals: this, we all know, has occurred at least six times in the case of Buddha, as Mr. Sinnett so well explains. At the same time Ushas announced without words, but with a slight blush, and a smile of ineffable tenderness, that from the day of my birth she knew that I was destined to be her future husband, and that at the appointed time we should be brought together. We now had our period of probation to go through together, and she told me that all the other *chelas* here were going through the necessary training preparatory to wedlock like myself, and that there would be a general marrying all round, when the long-expected culminating epoch should arrive.

Meantime, in order to enter upon the first stage of my new *chela*-ship, it became necessary for me to forget all the experiences which I had acquired during the last twenty years of my life, as she explained that it

would be impossible for my mind to receive the new truths which I had now to learn so long as I clung to what she called "the fantasies" of my *mahatma*-ship. I cannot describe the pang which this announcement produced. Still I felt that nothing must impede my search after truth; and I could not conceal from myself that, if in winning it I also won Ushas, I was not to be pitied. Nor to this day have I ever had reason to regret the determination at which I then arrived.

It would be impossible for me in the compass of this article to describe all my experiences in the new life to which I dedicated myself, nor indeed would it be proper to do so; suffice it to say, that I progressed beyond my Ushas' most sanguine expectations. And here I would remark, that I found my chief stimulus to exertion to be one which had been completely wanting in my former experience. It consisted simply in this, that altruism had been substituted for egotism. Formerly, I made the most herculean spiritual effort to tide myself over the great period of danger—the middle of the fifth round. "That," as Mr Sinnett correctly says, "is the stupendous achievement of the adept as re-

gards his own personal interests;" and of course our own interests were all that I or any of the other *mahatmas* ever thought of. "He has reached," pursues our author, "the farther shore of the sea in which so many of mankind will perish. He waits there, in a contentment which people cannot even realise without some glimmering of spirituality—the sixth sense—themselves, for the arrival of his future companions." This is perfectly true. I always found that the full enjoyment of this sixth sense among *mahatmas* was heightened just in proportion to the numbers of other people who perish, so long as you were safe yourself.

Here among the Sisters, on the other hand, the principle which was inculcated was, "Never mind if you perish yourself, so long as you can save others;" and indeed the whole effort was to elaborate such a system by means of the concentration of spiritual forces upon earth, as should be powerful enough to redeem it from its present dislocated and unhappy condition. To this end had the efforts of the Sisters been directed for so many centuries, and I had reason to believe that the time was not far distant

when we should emerge from our retirement to be the saviours and benefactors of the whole human race. It followed from this, of course, that I retained all the supernatural faculties which I had acquired as a *mahatma*, and which I now determined to use, not for my own benefit as formerly, but for that of my fellow-creatures, and was soon able—thanks to additional faculties, acquired under Ushas' tutorship—to flit about the world in my astral body without inconvenience.

I happened to be in London on business the other day in this ethereal condition, when Mr Sinnett's book appeared, and I at once projected it on the astral current to Thibet. I immediately received a communication from Ushas to the effect that it compelled some words of reply from the sisterhood, and a few days since I received them. I regret that it has been necessary to occupy so much of the reader's time with personal details. They were called for in order that he should understand the source of my information, and my peculiar qualifications for imparting it. It will be readily understood, after my long connection with the Thibetan brotherhood, how painful it must be to me to be the

instrument chosen not merely of throwing a doubt upon "the absolute truth concerning nature, man, the origin of the universe, and the destinies toward which its inhabitants are tending," to use Mr Sinnett's own words, but actually to demolish the whole structure of Esoteric Buddhism! Nor would I do this now were it not that the publication of the book called by that name has reluctantly compelled the sisterhood to break their long silence. If the Thibetan Brothers had only held their tongues and kept their secret as they have done hitherto, they would not now be so rudely disturbed by the Thibetan Sisters.

"The Sisters of Thibet," writes Ushas, of course with an astral pen in astral ink, "owe their origin to a circumstance which occurred in the time of Sankaracharya, erroneously supposed by the initiated to be an incarnation of Buddha. This teacher, who lived more than a century before the Christian era, dwelt chiefly upon the necessity of pursuing *gnyanam* in order to obtain *moksha*—that is to say, the importance of secret knowledge to spiritual progress, and the consummation

thereof. And he even went so far as to maintain that a man ought to keep all such knowledge secret from his wife. Now the wife of Sankaracharya, whose name was Nandana, 'she who rejoices,' was a woman of very profound occult attainments; and when she found that her husband was acquiring knowledges which he did not impart to her, she did not upbraid him, but laboured all the more strenuously in her own sphere of esoteric science, and she even discovered that all esoteric science had a twofold element in it—masculine and feminine—and that all discoveries of occult mysteries engaged in by man alone, were, so to speak, lop-sided, and therefore valueless. So she conveyed herself secretly, by processes familiar to her, away from her husband, and took refuge in this region of Thibet in which we now dwell, and which, with all his knowledges, Sankaracharya was never able to discover, for they were all subjective, and dealt not with the material things of this world. And she associated herself here in the pursuit of knowledge with a learned man called Svasar, 'he who is friendly,' who considered secret knowledge merely the means to an end, and even spirit-

ual progress valuable only in so far as it could be used to help others; and they studied deep mysteries as brother and sister together—and he had been a *mahatma* or *rishi* of the highest grade—and, owing to the aid he derived from his female associate, he discovered that the subjective conditions of *nirvana* and *devachan* were the result of one-sided male imaginings which had their origin in male selfishness; and this conviction grew in him in the degree in which the Parthivi Mutar, or 'Earth Mother,' became incarnated in Nandana. Thus was revealed to him the astounding fact that the whole system of the occult adepts had originated in the natural brains of men who had given themselves up to egotistical transcendental speculation—in fact, I cannot better describe the process than in the words of Mr Sinnett himself, where he alludes to 'the highly cultivated devotees to be met with occasionally in India, who build up a conception of nature, the universe and God, entirely on a metaphysical basis, and who have evolved their systems by sheer force of transcendental thinking—who will take some established system of philosophy as its groundwork, and

amplify on this to an extent which only an oriental metaphysician could dream of.'

"This, Mr Sinnett chooses to assume, was not the fact with the Thibet Brothers; but, in reality, this was just what they did. The fact that they have outstripped other similar transcendentalists is due to the circumstance that the original founders of the system were men of more powerful will and higher attainments than any who have succeeded them. And on their death they formed a compact spiritual society in the other world, impregnating the wills and imaginations of their disciples still on earth with their fantastic theories, which they still retain there, of a planetary chain, and the spiral advance of the seven rounds, and the septenary law, and all the rest of it. In order for human beings to come into these occult knowledges, it is necessary, as Mr Sinnett admits, for the adepts to go into trance-conditions—in other words, to lose all control of their normal, or as they would probably call them, their objective faculties. While in this condition, they are the sport of any invisible intelligences that choose to play upon them; but fearing lest they may be accused of this, they

erroneously assert that no such intelligences of a high order have cognisance of what happens in this world. The fact that *mahatmas* have powers which appear supernatural proves nothing, as Mr Sinnett also admits that innumerable *fakirs* and *yojis* possess these as well, whose authority on occultism he deems of no account, when he says that 'careless inquirers are very apt to confound such persons with the great adepts of whom they vaguely hear.' There can be no better evidence of the falsity of the whole conception than you are yourself. For to prove to you that you were the sport of a delusion, although your own experience as a *mahatma* in regard to the secret processes of nature, and the sensations attendant upon subjective conditions, exactly corresponded to those of all other *mahatmas*, you have, under my tutelage, at various times allowed yourself to fall into trance-conditions, when, owing to occult influences which we have brought to bear, a totally different idea concerning 'nature, man, the origin of the universe, and the destinies toward which its inhabitants are tending,' was presented to your sixth sense, which appeared 'absolute

truth' at the time, and which would have continued to seem so, had I not had the power of intromitting you through trance-conditions into a totally different set of apparent truths on the same subject, which were no more to be relied upon than the other. The fact is, that no seer, be he Hindoo, Buddhist, Christian, or of any other religion, is to be depended upon the moment he throws himself into abnormal organic conditions. We see best, as you have now learnt, into the deepest mysteries with all our senses about us. And the discovery of this great fact was due to woman; and it is for this reason that *mahatmas* shrink from female *chelas*—they are afraid of them. According to their philosophy, women play a poor part in the system of the universe, and their chances of reaching the blissful condition of *nirvana* are practically not to be compared with those of the men.

"There is no such thing as subjectivity apart from objectivity. Mr Sinnett very properly tells you 'that occult science regards force and matter as identical, and that it contemplates no principle in nature as wholly immaterial. The clue to the mystery

involved,' he goes on to say, 'lies in the fact, directly cognisable by occult experts, that matter exists in other states than those which are cognisable by the five senses;' but it does not become only cognisable subjectively on that account. You know very well, as an old *mahatma*, that you can cognise matter now with your sixth sense as well as with your five while in a perfectly normal condition, that you could not cognise except in trance-conditions before, and which even then you could only cognise incorrectly. The much-vaunted sixth sense of *mahatmas* needs sharpening as much as their logic, for you can no more separate subjectivity from objectivity than you can separate mind from matter. Christians, if they desire it, have a right to a heaven of subjective bliss, because they consider that they become immaterial when they go there; but Buddhists, who admit that they are in a sense material while in *devachan* or *nirvana*, and deny that their consciousness in that condition is in the same sense objective as well as subjective, talk sheer nonsense." Ushas used a stronger expression here, but out of consideration for my old *mahatma* friends, I suppress it.

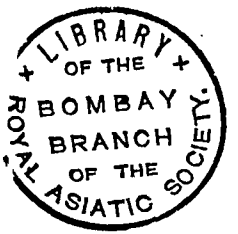
"'*Devachan*,' says our Guru — speaking through his disciple in order to escape from this dilemma—'will seem as real as the chairs and tables round us; and remember that above all things, to the profound philosophy of occultism, are the chairs and tables, and the whole objective scenery of the world, unreal and merely transitory delusions of sense.' If, as he admits, they are material, why should they be more unreal than the chairs and tables in *devachan*, which are also material, since occult science contemplates no principle in nature as wholly immaterial? The fact is, that there is no more unreal and transitory delusion of sense than those 'states' known to the adepts as *devachan* or *nirvana*; they are mere dreamlands, invented by metaphysicians, and lived in by them after death —which are used by them to encourage a set of dreamers here to evade the practical duties which they owe to their fellow-men in this world. 'Hence it is possible,' says our author, 'for yet living persons to have visions of *devachan*, though such visions are rare and only one-sided, the entities in *devachan*, sighted by the earthly clairvoyant, being quite unconscious themselves of undergoing

such observation.' This is an erroneous and incorrect assumption on the Guru's part. 'The spirit of the clairvoyant,' he goes on, 'ascends into the condition of *devachan* in such rare visions, and thus becomes subject to the vivid delusions of that existence.' Vivid delusions indeed, the fatal consequences of which are, that they separate their votaries from the practical duties of life, and create a class of idle visionaries who, wrapping themselves in their own vain conceits, would stand by and allow their fellow-creatures to starve to death, because, as Mr Sinnett frankly tells us, 'if spiritual existence, vivid subjective consciousness, really does go on for periods greater than the periods of intellectual physical existence, in the ratio, as we have seen in discussing the devachanic condition, of 80 to 1 at least, then surely man's subjective existence is more important than his physical existence and intellect in error, when all its efforts are bent on the amelioration of the physical existence.'

"This is the ingenious theory which the Brothers of Thibet have devised to release them from acknowledging that they have any other Brothers in this world to whom they

are under sacred obligations besides themselves, and which, owing to the selfish principle that underlies it, has a tendency to sap the foundations of all morality. So that we have this nineteenth-century apostle of Esoteric Buddhism venturing to assert to his Western readers that 'it is not so rough a question as that—whether man be wicked or virtuous—which must really, at the final critical turning-point, decide whether he shall continue to live and develop into higher phases of existence, or cease to live altogether.' We, the Sisters of Thibet, repudiate and denounce in the strongest terms any such doctrine as the logical outcome either of the moral precepts of Buddha or of the highest esoteric science. Let the Brothers of Thibet beware of any longer cherishing the delusion that the Sisters of Thibet, because their existence is purely objective, 'are therefore unreal and merely transitory delusions of sense.' We also have a secret to reveal—the result of twenty centuries of occult learning—and we formally announce to you, the so-called adepts of occult science, that if you persist in disseminating any more of your deleterious metaphysical compounds in this

world under the name of Esoteric Buddhism, we will not only no longer refrain, as we have hitherto done, from tormenting you in your subjective conditions while still in your *rupas*, but, by virtue of the occult powers we possess, will poison the elements of *devachan* until subjective existence becomes intolerable there for your fifth and sixth principles,—your *manas* and your *buddhis*,—and *nirvana* itself will be converted into hell."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ADOLPHUS: A COMEDY OF AFFINITIES.

Dramatis personæ.

The Hon. Adolphus Gresham.	Lady Elaine Bendore.
The Earl of Gules.	The Countess of Gules.
Adolphus Plumper.	Mrs Plumper.
Mr Flamm.	Charles.

Scene I.—*A railway carriage. The* Earl *and* Countess of Gules—Lady Elaine Bendore —*The* Hon. Adolphus Gresham.

Elaine. I must really beg of you to stop, Mr Gresham. You cannot think how you pain and surprise me. I am sure I never had the least idea! Besides, supposing papa or mamma should hear you.

Adolphus. Lord Gules is asleep, and her ladyship is absorbed in her novel; besides,

you may be sure that I have taken care to ascertain their sentiments before I venture to say what I have to you. Oh, Elaine, if I could but hope!

Train stops. Guard [*looking in*]. All the smoking-carriages are engaged, gentlemen; but you'll find room in here.

[*Enter* Adolphus Plumper *and* Mr Flamm. Flamm *seats himself opposite* Elaine, *and* Plumper *opposite* Adolphus.

Flamm [*aside to* Plumper]. By Jove, Plumper! you never told me you had a twin brother. Polish up your spectacles, old man—you've made 'em damp by that race we had to catch the train—and look at your *vis-à-vis*.

[Plumper *takes off his spectacles with great deliberation, wipes them, puts them on again, and stares at* Adolphus.

Plumper [*aside*] *stammering*. Dud-dud-dud-do you see a likeness? Dud-dud-dud-don't see it myself. He's bab-bab-bab-bald, and he's not sh-sh-sh-ort-sighted.

Fl. Probably he doesn't stammer either. I'll try presently. Positively, if he wore spectacles and a wig of your hair, I shouldn't know you apart.

Lady Gules. [*aside to* Elaine]. Did you ever see anything more extraordinary, my dear? What a horrid caricature of our dear Adolphus Gresham!

El. [*aside*]. I can't say I agree with you, mamma. I think he has a more intelligent expression—more soul, I should say.

Lady G. You are quite ridiculous, Elaine. Half the girls in London have been setting their caps at Mr Gresham for the last few seasons, till they have given him up as invulnerable; and now that you have a chance of becoming one of the richest peeresses in England, you do nothing but snub him. He is as clever and charming as he will be rich when his father dies, and is certain to become a Cabinet Minister some day. He's considered the most rising young man of his party.

El. That he may easily be, considering he is a Conservative. Oh, mamma! how can you suppose that I would ever marry a Conservative?

Lady G. I have no patience with you, Elaine; a nice mess your Radicals have made of it with Egypt and Ireland. But we won't go into that now; only remember this, if he proposes, and you don't accept

him, your father and I will be seriously displeased.

El. [*sighing*]. I'm sure the gentleman opposite is a friend of the people. See! he's reading the 'Pall Mall.' [*Aside to* Adolphus.] Mamma has just been telling me that she sees such a strange likeness between you and your opposite neighbour.

Ad. Ah! Plumper—if the name on his hat-box is to be believed; A. Plumper, too. I wonder whether A. stands for Adolphus? I don't feel flattered.

El. Now that is nothing but Tory prejudice. I am sure he looks very distinguished, though his name is Plumper. I have no doubt he's a self-made man.

Pl. Pup-pup-pup-pardon me, madam; shall I put the window up? I see you feel the dud-dud-dud-draught.

El. Thank you. No; I prefer it open. But may I ask you to lend me your 'Echo'? it's a paper I like so much, and so seldom see.

Pl. Cheap, but not nasty; enjoys a vast circulation among the middle classes. The Conservatives are as far behind us in journalistic capacity as they are in parliamentary eloquence.

Pl. You must make allowances for my friend. He's on the pup-pup-pup-press himself, and expects shortly to get into Pup-pup-pup-Parliament.

El. Oh, I do so hope he will! You don't think there is a reaction setting in, do you? Papa says that Mr Gladstone is losing his hold on the country.

Lord Gules [*awaking with a snort*]. Not, however, before the country has lost its hold upon him. He cares no more for his country, sir, than I do for the Chinese in California. He's a traitor, sir, to his principles; he's——

El. Oh, papa, do stop!—here we are at the Victoria—and we have no right to judge any one so harshly. I assure you such strong expressions only make me feel more and more convinced how wrong you must be. [*To* Plumper, *handing back his paper.*] Thank you so much. I'm so sorry I have not had time to read it.

Lady G. Good-bye, Mr Gresham; remember that you have promised to dine with us to-morrow night. We shall be quite alone; but I am sure you don't care about a party.

Ad. I need not say with what pleasure I shall look forward to it. *Au revoir*, Lady

Elaine. [*Aside.*] You do not know how you have been tempting me to abandon all my cherished political convictions for your sake. It is to be hoped that the Radicals will not follow up their success with the caucus by organising the young ladies of their party and letting them loose on society as propagandists of their Utopian ideas and political fallacies.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.—Lady Gules's *Boudoir.* Elaine *and* Adolphus.

Ad. Dear Lady Elaine, Lady Gules has given me special permission and opportunity to explain myself more fully than was possible yesterday. Please tell me why you were so surprised at what I said, and why you think me so very objectionable?

El. I don't think you at all objectionable, Mr Gresham, as a member of society; on the contrary, I think you charming; though I do feel that, magnetically, we are wide as the poles asunder! Oh, believe me, we have no grounds of common sympathy, either in matters of philosophical, political, or religious

thought—and above all, in art! You seem to lack that enthusiasm for humanity which could alone constitute an affinity between us. I was surprised, because I had hoped to find in you an intelligent companion; and mortified at the discovery that you could not rise to higher ground than that of an ordinary admirer,—men in these days seem to think that women have no other *raison d'être* except to be made love to.

Ad. I do not think that is a new idea, Lady Elaine; but is it absolutely necessary, in order that you should return the deep affection I feel for you, that we should agree politically, philosophically, theologically, and æsthetically? In old days women did not trouble themselves on these matters, but trusted to their hearts rather than to their heads to guide their affections.

El. And so I do now. I feel instinctively that we are not kindred spirits; that the mysterious chord of sympathy which vibrates in the heart of a girl with the first tone of the voice of the man she is destined to love, does not exist between us. Oh, indeed, indeed, Mr Gresham, although I adore Frederic Harrison as a thinker, as much as I dislike Mr

Mallock—though I read every word he writes as a duty—I am not destitute of romance. I am a profound believer in the doctrine of affinity. Who that accepts, as I do, the marvellous teaching of Comte, and remembers that the highest ideas which it contains were inspired by a woman, could fail to be? But I shall know the man towards whom I am destined to occupy the relation that Comte's Countess did to him, at a glance. No words will need to pass between us to assure us that we are one in sentiment. It will be as impossible for him to be indifferent to elevating the taste of the masses in matters of domestic detail, or be otherwise wanting in a whole-hearted devotion to the service of humanity, or to scoff at the theory of evolution, as it would be for him to accept the errors and superstitions of an obsolete theology, or the antiquated dogmas of the Conservatives about landed property.

Ad. And if I fulfilled all these conditions, so far as a thorough philosophical and political sympathy was concerned, would that avail me nothing to produce this hidden affinity?

El. Absolutely nothing. In the first place,

you could not pretend to believe and feel what you did not believe and feel; and in the second, if you could, I should instantly sense the absence of that internal attraction towards each other which would be irresistible in both. You were right, Mr Gresham, when you said the heart and not the head should be the guide; and I trust it absolutely—so give up a hope which must be vain. Believe me, I feel deeply pained at having to speak so decidedly, but it is better that you should be under no delusion. Still, do not let me lose you as a friend whom I shall always esteem. You will soon get over it, and will have no difficulty in finding a wife who will suit you far better than I should ever have done.

Ad. There, believe me, you are mistaken; but it is a point impossible to discuss. Goodbye, Lady Elaine. Thanks for your frankness and patience with me. Perhaps I shall get over it, as you say. I shall take refuge in my yacht, and try the curative effect of a cruise round the world. It will be a year at least before we meet again. [*Exit* Adolphus.

El. Poor Adolphus! how absolutely impossible is love, where the hidden sympathy of

soul is wanting!—and yet how nice he is [*sighs*], and how manfully he accepted his fate! What philosophy can really explain the mystery of that magnetic affinity called love, which so unaccountably exercises its attracting influences over the whole animal creation, and most probably over plants? If it is a latent potentiality of matter, how did it get there? Now for a scene with mamma.

[*Exit* Elaine.

SCENE III.—*The* Countess of Gules's *Boudoir.* Lady Gules *and* Lady Elaine *reading.* *Enter* Charles *with card and letter.*

El. [*reading card*]. Mr Adolphus Plumper! Is the gentleman coming up-stairs, Charles?

Charles. No, my lady; he only left the card and this letter, and said he would call again. [*Exit* Charles.

El. [*opening letter*]. From Mr Gresham, mamma, dated Naples. [*Reads.*] "DEAR ELAINE,—I felt so much touched by the kindness of your last words to me when we parted, that I venture to hope that it may interest you to know, as a friend, how it has fared

with me since I left England. The curative process does not seem to have fairly set in yet, but I am going to try the effect of a little mild excitement by joining the demonstrating fleets at Alexandria. For a month past I have been idling here; and curiously enough, the first person I stumbled upon in the Chiaja Gardens was Mr Adolphus Plumper — our railway companion on the only journey I ever had the happiness to take with you, and who seated himself by my side on a bench to which I had resorted for a quiet cigar. As there are few foreigners here at this season, we have been thrown almost daily together, and I have been quite delighted to find how very much superior he is to what I thought he *looked* when you honoured me by pointing out our resemblance. I ought to speak highly of him, for he saved my life. I took him a cruise in my yacht, and the gig in which we were landing one day was upset in some breakers. I had been stunned, and should have been drowned had he not come to the rescue; and I really feel that for this and some other reasons which I will explain when we meet, I owe him a debt of gratitude that I can never hope to repay. Although he is

too retiring by nature to say so, I could see, when I made some laughing allusions to the occasion of our first meeting, that he would be glad to continue to make the acquaintance of Lord and Lady Gules—in other words, to continue the political discussion he then commenced with you. Singular to state, he is an admirer of Congreve and all that school, so I am sure you will have plenty of topics in common. Mr Plumper has made an enormous fortune as a contractor, and now chiefly occupies himself with works of charity and benevolence. One of his special hobbies is the introduction of the æsthetic principle into *Kindergartens*. I have given him a hint not to introduce his vulgar friend Flamm—pardon me the expression, though he is a Radical. I have given Plumper a few lines to Lady Gules. Please do all you can to overcome the prejudice against him which both she and Lord Gules are sure to entertain; and believe me, yours faithfully,

"ADOLPHUS GRESHAM."

Lady G. A Radical, a plutocrat, and an infidel! That is a mixture that ought to suit you, Elaine.

El. Quite as well as a Tory, a spendthrift, and a bigot, which is the one I usually meet in society, mamma. But please do not let us quarrel. I always try to be polite to your mixtures. For Mr Gresham's sake, be civil to mine.

Lady G. For Mr Gresham's sake, indeed! What have you done for Mr Gresham's sake that puts me under an obligation to him? However, I suppose we must ask the man to dinner. Is there any address on his card?

El. 20 Heavitree Gardens.

Lady G. One of those millionaire palaces, I suppose, in the back regions of South Kensington. The carriage is waiting, so I shall leave you to write the invitation. You had better ask him for Tuesday, when we have got some people coming to dinner.

[*Exit* Lady Gules.

El. [*taking up the letter, reads*]. "Now chiefly occupies himself with works of charity and benevolence. One of his special hobbies is the introduction of æsthetic principles into *Kindergartens*." How refreshing to meet a man at last who takes a living interest in the welfare of his fellow-creatures! I am sure I shall like him. [*Writes, and rings the bell.*]

Enter Charles.

Lady E. Please put this in the post, Charles. [*Exit* Charles.] Now I must go and get ready to go out riding with papa, and reconcile him to the dreadful idea of having "a Radical, a plutocrat, and an infidel" at his dinner-table. [*Exit* Elaine.

(*A month elapses.*)

SCENE IV.—Lady Gules's *Boudoir.* Lord *and* Lady Gules.

Lord G. I tell you what it is, my dear—we've only known that fellow Plumper a month, and he has already completely captivated Elaine with his *Kindergarten*, and his sunflowers, and his hatred of the landed interest and Irish coercion, and love of the *clôture* and humanity, and Buddha and Brahma, and Zoroaster and Mahomet, and all the rest of them. I must really take steps to find out whether Gresham was well informed about his reputed wealth. I shall ride down and take a look at 20 Heavitree Gardens tomorrow. I haven't met a single man at the Club who has ever heard of him.

Lady G. It's no use: if he should turn out a pauper, or even a swindler, I am afraid Elaine will marry him. I saw it in her eye last night; and so, I should think, did he. He certainly can't complain of not receiving encouragement. I only wonder that he has not yet proposed. I believe the man to be capable of any act of audacity, in spite of his languid manner, and his long hair, and short-sightedness, and his stammer.

Enter Elaine.

Lord G. Are you coming to ride with me, or going out to drive with your mother, Elaine?

El. Neither, dear papa. I am too busy finishing a paper I am writing on the "Chiton; or, Clothing for the masses on the principles of the ideal of the ancient Greeks," for the next meeting of the Women's Dress Reform Association.

Lord G. Well, take care you make them put enough on. Remember the climate, if you ignore other considerations.

Lady G. And pray do not so far overstep the bounds of maidenly modesty as to consult your Mr Plumper on the subject.

[*Exit* Lord *and* Lady Gules.

El. [*sighing*]. *My* Mr Plumper! Ah, Adolphus, there is not a fibre in our bodies or souls—and why should not souls have fibres?—that does not vibrate in harmony! We are like Æolian harps that make the same music to the same airs of the affections, while electrically our brains respond sympathetically to the same wave-current of idea. Emotionally, intellectually, we are one. Why should I allow an absurd custom of conventional civilisation, degrading to the sex, to prevent my telling him so? What more inherent right can be vested by nature in a woman than that of telling a man that she loves him, and that, therefore, he belongs to her? Hark! his step. My Adolphus!

Enter Adolphus.

Ad. I have ventured to kuk-kuk-kuk-call, Lady Elaine, with the pap-pap-pattern I promised of female attire suited to all classes; for why should we recognise any did-did-distinction between the folds which drape the form of the aristocrat and the pop-pop-pauper? It is all in kuk-kuk-curves and circles; there is not a straight line about it worn thus. See how graciously it flows!

[*Puts his head through a hole in the middle.*] But allow me; your form will do far more justice to it than mine. [*Takes it off and puts it on* Lady Elaine.] Ah, how divinely precious! [*Gazes with rapture.* Lady Elaine *sits down in it.*]

El. Dear Adolphus, why should this strained conventional formality exist any longer between us? Can we not read each other's thoughts? Can we not feel each other's hearts beating in sweet accord? Are we not formed and fashioned for each other? Let this exquisite garment, which we have both worn, be the symbol of that internal robe which costumes our united souls, woven from the texture of our affections.

Ad. [*falling on his knees, kisses its hem*]. Sweet symbol of sanctified intuitions! Tit-tit-tit-transparent—though it may seem tot-tot-tolerably thick; for does it not reveal to me the workings of the soul of my beb-beb-beloved? Ah, Elaine, how trifling do earthly treasures seem, compared with those of the affections! You will be mine, for ever mine, dud-dud-darling, will you not—even though I may not have the riches I am supposed to possess?

El. Oh, Adolphus! how can you ask me such a question? What is the wealth of the pocket as compared with the wealth of the soul!

Ad. True! oh, quite intensely true!—for how sweetly sings the poet Oscar on this theme!—

"As like miners we explore
Hidden treasures in the soul,
And we pip-pip-pick the amorous ore
Firmly bedded in its hole;
New emotions come to light,
Flashing in affections' rays,
Scintillating to the sight,
With a tit-tit-tit-transcendental bib-bib-bib-blaze,
Warming us until we burn
With a glow of sacred fire,
And as coals to diamonds turn,
Sparkling in us with did-did-did-desire."

El. Oh, quite, quite too lovely! Come, Adolphus—why should we linger here, now that our troths are plighted? Why should we not at once brave the world together? I need the sweet scents of the air, the rustle

of leaves, the singing of birds, the chattering of monkeys, and the hum of nature. Let us go, my love, and walk in the Zoo.

Ad. [*rising*]. Dud-dud-dud-do you intend to keep that on?

El. What on?

Ad. This mystic garment of kuk-kuk-curves and circles.

El. No; I will keep it for a pattern and a sweet reminiscence. Now I will go and put on my Louis Quatorze hat, and be back in a moment, if you will go and call a hansom.

[*Exit* Elaine.

[Adolphus *bursts into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.*

[*Exit laughing.*

SCENE V.—*The Zoological Gardens.*

El. How sweet are these sights and sounds when hallowed by the consciousness of a beloved presence! How one glows with affection towards every object in nature! Adolphus, dear, don't you feel, with me, that our hearts warm towards the hippopotamus?

Ad. Mine is positively beating with the

violence of my affection for him. If he was not so wet and bib-bib-big, I could throw my arms round him. Dear hippop-pop-pop-pop-otamoms!

El. Oh, look! there is that gentleman who got into the train with you on the blessed day that we first met. Mr Flamm, I think Mr Gresham said his name was.

Enter Flamm.

Flamm. Ah, Plumper, how are you, old man? I was looking for you everywhere. Why, what have you done with Mrs Plumper and the children?

Ad. My mother and her little grandchildren, you mean. I was not aware that they were to come here to-day.

Fl. Your mother! and grandchildren! Why, what the dev—— Oh, ah, ahem! [*Aside.*] I see—mum's the word. Oh fie! sly dog! Naughty, naughty!—but so nice! [*Whispers.*] You are quite safe with me. [*Aloud.*] Yes, dear old lady—she's getting too old to walk much now. [*Aside.*] I only hope we shan't meet the young one. A jolly row there'll be!

El. I hope soon to have the pleasure of

being introduced to Mr Plumper's mother. I am sure I shall like her.

Fl. Oh, I am sure you will; she is the dearest, most delightful old lady! [*Aside.*] At least I hope she is by this time, for she was a horrid old cat up to the day of her death, ten years ago. By Jove! here come Mrs Plumper and the young uns. Now for it!

Enter Mrs Plumper.

Mrs Plumper. Why, Adolphus, where have you been? Excuse me, madam; I did not see that you were upon my husband's arm. Perhaps he'll have the goodness to present his wife to you.

El. His wife! her husband! [*Screams—faints.*]

Mrs P. Yes, madam. You may well scream, "His wife! her husband!" and then pretend to faint. Who else's wife do you suppose I am?

Ad. I am sorry I have no time for explanation now, as I must attend to this young lady; but if you will have the kindness to hold my hat, Mr Flamm. [*Hands his hat to* Flamm.] And you, madam, to take care of

these. [*Takes off his wig and spectacles and hands them to* Mrs Plumper.] Your own senses will explain a good deal. As you may have already discovered, I am not Mr Plumper at all; in fact, I perceive him approaching. Help me to hold her head a little higher, please Mr Flamm; and Mrs Plumper, kindly undo the back of her dress, or her stays, or her *chiton*, or whatever is underneath, and let go everything generally, so as to give her a chance of breathing.

Enter Plumper.

Fl. Here, Plumper, you're a medical man, just come in the nick of time. This gentleman here has been personating you for some reason or other, and the discovery caused the young lady to faint. Mysterious, isn't it?

Ad. Not at all, when you come to know the circumstances. Here is my card; and you will find me ready to make any apology or offer you any satisfaction you may require. Meantime, Dr Plumper, let me implore you to assist me in bringing her to.

Pl. There now, my gug-gug-good lady, take a smell of this. There now, we are beginning to feel beb-beb-better already.

[*Aside.*] Most extraordinary coincidence, Flamm: this is the same lady and gentleman we travelled up to town with a kuk-kuk-couple of months ago; and you remarked upon our wonderful resemblance to each other. Horrid bob-bob-bore, a fellow's being so like you; he can pip-pip-play all sorts of tricks upon you. Just a chance he did not get me into a did-did-devil of a scrape with Jemima.

Fl. [*aside*]. Well, you can always pay him off in his own coin—that is, if you shave your head, and throw away your spectacles, and give up stammering.

Pl. [*aside*]. But I can't—that's where he has the pup-pup-pull over me. [*Aloud.*] There now, one or two bib-bib-breaths, and we are all right. Now, dud-dud-don't go off again; it can be all satisfactorily explained. [*Aside.*] Hang me if I know how!

El. [*opens her eyes while* Plumper *is bending over her — screams*]. Oh, Adolphus!—[*shuts them again.*]

Pl. There, there, my gug-gug-good lady, I'm not Adolphus; at least I am Adolphus, bub-bub-but not your Adolphus. Here, Mr Gresham, if you're her Ad-dod-dod-dod-olphus, you'd better take her.

El. [*opens her eyes, sees* Adolphus *bending over her—screams*]. Oh, where am I?—[*shuts them again.*]

Pl. In the arms of your Adolphus. We're bub-bub-both Adolphuses. I suppose, if you'll rouse yourself a little, you'll soon fif-fif-find out which is the right one.

Ad. Lady Elaine, pardon me, and I will explain all. I am Adolphus Gresham. I came back from Naples a month ago, and have deceived you by disguising myself as Dr Plumper. I shall never forgive myself unless you forgive me.

El. Oh, this is too horrible! [*Shrinks from him, and bursts into a violent fit of weeping.*]

Pl. There, that's capital! Nothing like a hearty fit of tears to kuk-kuk-comfort a woman when she finds herself in a mess. Now Flamm, if you call a kuk-kuk-cab, we'll put her in and send her home.

[*Exit* Flamm.

Ad. If you'll have the kindness, Dr Plumper, to give me your address, and allow me to call upon you to-morrow, I think I shall be able to give both Mrs Plumper and yourself a complete explanation of what must appear most extraordinary conduct on my part.

Re-enter Flamm.

Fl. The cab is ready.

Ad. Now, Lady Elaine, if you will allow Dr Plumper and myself to assist you, we will accompany you home. [*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE VI.—Lady Gules's *Boudoir.* Lord *and* Lady Gules—Adolphus.

Lord G. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, wait a moment, my dear Gresham, or you'll kill me with laughing. It's the best joke I ever heard in my life, and most cleverly executed. So you caught the Radical, Comtist, æsthetic little minx in her own trap. Oh, excellent! I can't say how thoroughly Lady Gules and I congratulate you on the success of your ruse, and how happy you have made us. My lady there is too pleased with the probable result to quarrel about the means. But how you did take us all in! I give you my word I never suspected you for a moment. Your stammer and wig were both admirable. As for Elaine, she's torturing her brain with metaphysical doubts as to the nature of love, and says she will never love again. She tells

her mother that her Adolphus was an ideal personage who has no longer existence, and that her love is buried with him; but here she comes, so we will leave you to fight your own battle.

[*Exeunt* Lord *and* Lady Gules.

Enter Elaine.

Ad. Dear Elaine.

El. Sir!

Ad. Nay, rather Adolphus than sir.

El. How can I say Adolphus? there is no Adolphus.

Ad. Indeed there is—[*producing wig and spectacles*]—pup-pup-pardon me while I put them on. If it was only my wig and spectacles you cared about, did-did-dearest, I will wear them and stammer through life fuf-fuf-for your sake.

El. Oh, Mr Gresham, how can you be so heartless? You know very well I loved you—at least I didn't love you,—I mean, I thought I loved Adolphus—at least I was sure of it at the time; but I'm sure I don't now. Oh, how cruel of you!

Ad. But if it was not my wig and spectacles and stammer for which you felt a magnetic

affinity, I want to know exactly what it was you did love; because I am precisely the same human being without them as with them. What about me struck that mysterious chord of sympathy which vibrated in your affections when I was Plumper, which failed to strike it as Gresham? Why should not our hearts still beat in sweet accord without my wig? Why should not "this exquisite garment, which we have both worn—[*takes up the dress, which is lying on a chair in the corner*]—be the symbol of that internal robe which costumes our united souls, woven from the texture of our affections," without my spectacles?

El. Mr Gresham, how dare you talk such nonsense? The texture of our affections indeed! mine are dead—basely, foully murdered. Oh, was ever woman so cruelly humiliated?

Ad. Nay, Elaine, I merely wished to prove to you that your aversion for me was entirely unfounded. You have proved to me that your love for Adolphus, in the abstract, is as baseless and unsubstantial. I am not sorry under the circumstances that it should have been murdered, for it was a poor exotic. Let

us not attempt to analyse the mysterious nature of that passion which is too precious a plant to tear up by the roots in order to discover the origin of its existence, but learn rather from this lesson, so painful to us both, that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of even in the philosophy of Comte, the doctrines of the æsthete, or the politics of Mr Gladstone. And now, Elaine, farewell,—this time you need not fear my coming back from Naples. [*Moves towards the door and lingers.*]

[Elaine *puts her face between her hands and sobs convulsively.*

Ad. Elaine, dear Elaine [*returns softly and takes her hand*]; do you wish me to go?

[Elaine *shakes her head.*

Ad. Do you wish me to stay?

[Elaine *shakes her head.*

Ad. What do you wish me to do? I must do either one or the other. Shall I stay and go alternately, or shall we make a fresh start, without prejudice, as the lawyers say?

El. Oh, how heartlessly you talk! What do I care what the lawyers say? Can't you see how miserable I am, and how hollow everything seems all at once? I don't believe

in any one, and I don't feel as if I knew anything, except that love is an inexplicable phenomenon of matter. I shall become an agnostic.

Re-enter Lord *and* Lady Gules.

Lord G. Well, have you two young people come to an understanding? Take my word for it, Elaine, an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory in love-affairs, and be thankful if the man is willing to become your husband, who has had sufficient common-sense to teach you the lesson. Holloa! whom have we here?

Enter Charles *with cards.*

Lord G. [*reads*]. "Dr and Mrs Plumper and Mr Flamm, to inquire for Lady Elaine Bendore." Oho! our friend Plumper seems to know the difference between theory and practice at any rate, and is evidently anxious to extend the latter. [*To* Charles.] Show them up.

Ad. I called upon the Plumpers this morning, and explained the whole affair to the entire satisfaction of the worthy couple.

[Adolphus *and* Lady Elaine *whisper apart.*

Lord G. I have to thank you, Dr Plumper, for the timely assistance you rendered my daughter—first, in nearly sending her into a fit, and then in bringing her out of it; and am glad of this opportunity of expressing my sense of the obligation I am under to Mrs Plumper and Mr Flamm.

Dr P. Oh, don't mention it, my lord; I am sure I was only too gug-gug-glad to be of any assistance to Mr Gresham by being so like him as to frighten the young lady into a fif-fif-fit. And as for bringing her to—I always take the sal-volatile in my pup-pup-pup-pocket on Mrs Plumper's account.

Ad. And you'll accept me, Elaine, as your husband, even though I don't abandon my political aspirations, or introduce æsthetic principles into *Kindergartens*, or adopt the philosophy of Comte?

El. [*giving him her hand*]. Oh, Adolphus, you have convinced me that the loftiest of all aspirations, the purest of all principles, the supremest of all philosophies, is——

Ad. A-dod-dod-dolphus!

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